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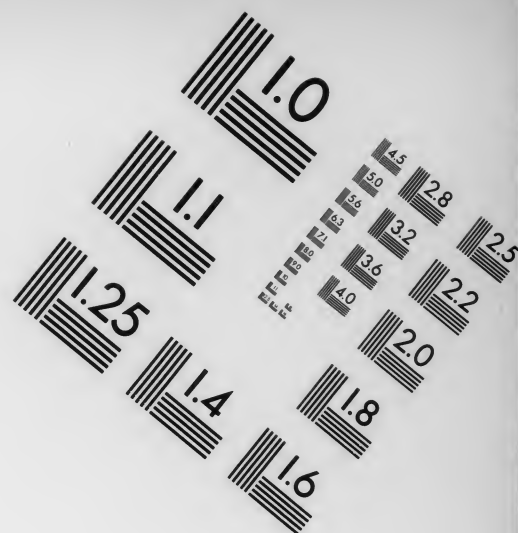
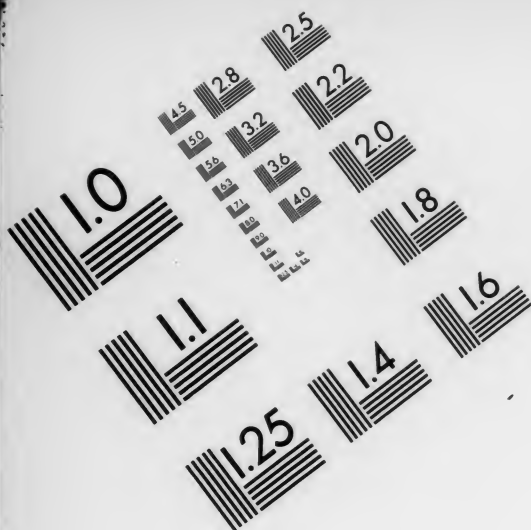


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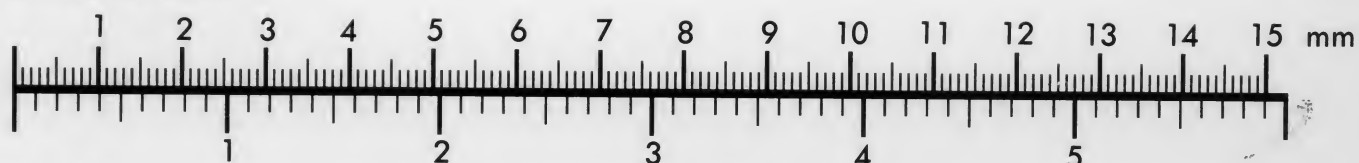
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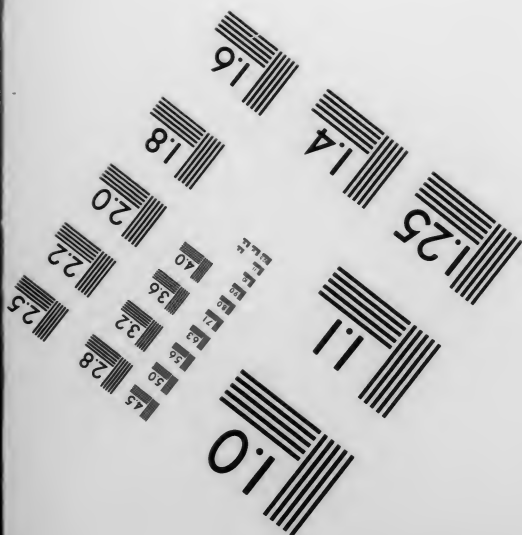
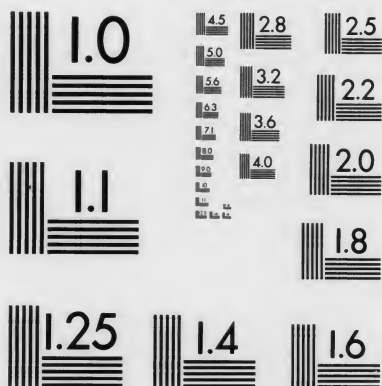
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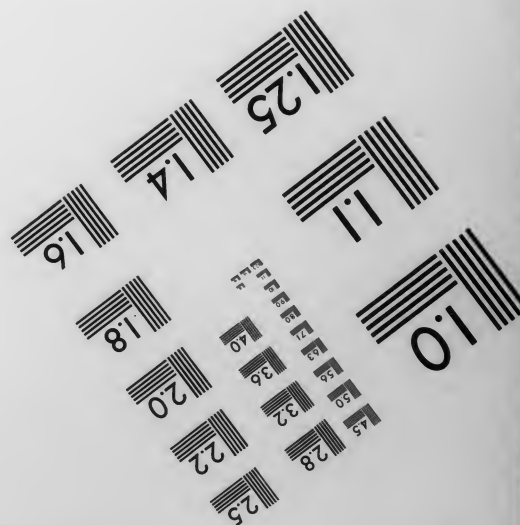
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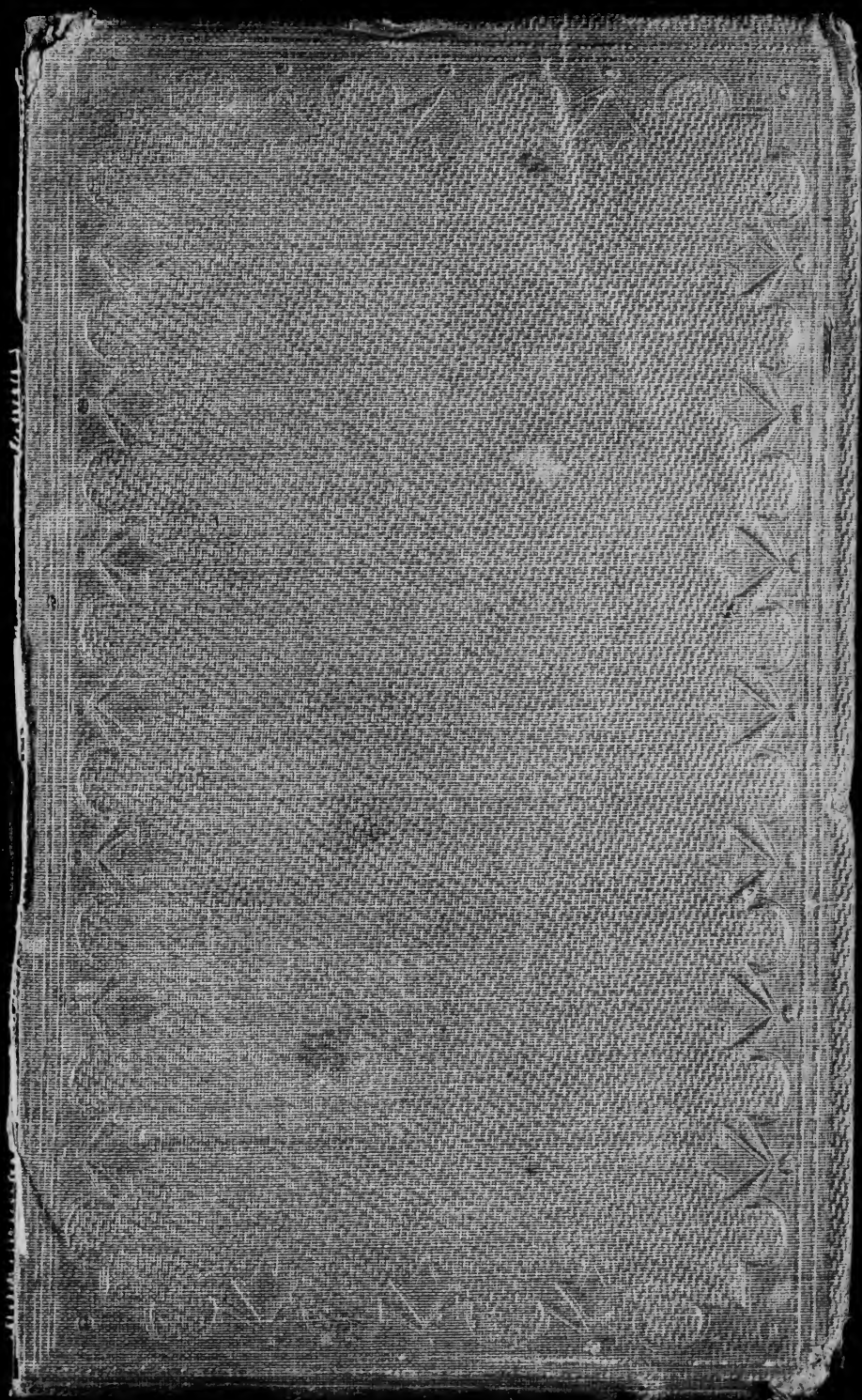


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HISTORY OF ENGLAND

BY THE

REV. GEORGE R. GLEIG MA.

CHAPLAIN GENERAL TO THE FORCES

IN THREE VOLUMES

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

VOL I

LONDON
JOHN W PARKER AND SON WEST STRAND
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PREFACE.

THE following pages are designed to occupy, in the literature of this country, a space which has, perhaps, too long been left vacant. There is no deficiency or elaborate histories of England, or of abridgments well adapted to the use of schools, and readers of tender years. But no work, I believe, has been yet published, for those who are too far advanced in life to be satisfied with a mere school-book, and yet have not leisure for studying the more voluminous writers.

At the suggestion of the Committee of General Literature and Education, I have cheerfully undertaken the office of family historian; and I have done my best to give an impartial narrative of facts in plain and simple language, and to make it a vehicle through which none but pure and sound principles should be conveyed to the understandings of my readers.

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HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

BRITAIN INVADED BY CÆSAR.—STATE OF THE COUNTRY.
 —RETAINS ITS LIBERTY FOR NINETY-SEVEN YEARS.—
 AGAIN INVADED AND SUBDUED.—ROMAN SYSTEM OF
 GOVERNMENT.—EARLY INTRODUCTION OF CHRIS-
 TIANITY.

[B.C. 55 to A.D. 210.]

FOR the first knowledge which we possess of the early
 history of Britain we are indebted to the pen of a
 Roman general. Julius Cæsar, after conducting his
 victorious legions from the foot of the Alps to the mouth
 of the Rhine, became inspired with the ambition of
 adding Britain to the already overgrown dominions of
 the Roman senate. Whether a mistaken estimate of
 the productions of the island led him to conceive this
 design, or whether he made avarice the pretext for
 keeping an army together, by means of which he had
 already begun to calculate on the attainment of a
 higher object, it is not worth while to inquire. All that
 we know with certainty on the subject amounts to this,
 that, soon after the subjugation of the Morini, he began
 to turn a hostile eye towards the Britons, whose sup-
 port of the Gallic nations, in their struggle for inde-
 pendence, afforded him a plausible excuse for carrying
 the war into their country.

Having devoted some time to the collection and
 equipment of a fleet, Cæsar, who had failed to obtain

any satisfactory information respecting the manners and resources of his new enemies, embarked at Calais with the infantry of two legions, on the 26th day of August, B. C. 55. A few hours' sail carried him across the strait; but, when he beheld the heights between Dover and Deal crowded with armed men, he altered his course, and, standing northward, cast anchor in Pegwell bay, nearly opposite to the spot on which the ruins of Richborough castle now stand. There, in the face of the natives, who had followed the motions of the fleet, he prepared to force a landing. It was not effected without hard fighting; for the Britons boldly charged the invaders while struggling in the water; and, having brought into the field both chariots and horsemen, obtained for a time some advantages. But a judicious use of his galleys, and the devoted heroism of a standard-bearer of the tenth legion, enabled Cæsar, in the end, to turn the tide of battle. The Britons, in spite of great personal valour and superior numbers, were beaten back, and the Romans proceeded to form their first encampment in Britain, on the skirts of the Isle of Thanet.

Disheartened by this repulse the chiefs of the barbarians made advances towards submission, and had already delivered a portion of the hostages required, when the occurrence of a storm, which seriously injured the Roman fleet, revived in them a desire to defend their liberties. They withdrew in secret from the Roman camp, and, hastily assembling their followers, attacked the seventh legion while scattered in the collection of forage. The timely arrival of succours saved that corps from destruction; but the Britons, nothing daunted, delayed only till their numbers were increased, when they again advanced with great bravery, and made a furious assault upon the lines. They were a second time defeated with prodigious slaughter. Nevertheless, these repeated displays of courage and

determination were not without their effect upon the mind of the conqueror, who began to think with anxiety upon the nature of his position, which the near approach of winter rendered extremely critical. The consequence was, that satisfied with the impression which he had made, he accepted the illusory submission of a few of the chieftains; and, having been absent from Gaul barely three weeks, re-embarked his army, and returned to the continent.

Such were the petty results of an expedition which, by Cæsar himself, is described as a mere reconnoissance, but which was celebrated in Rome by a thanksgiving of twenty days, as the conquest of a new world. The following spring, however, was destined to witness events of greater moment. By dint of extraordinary exertion, during the winter months, the Roman general had brought together above eight hundred ships, in which were embarked five complete legions, with upwards of two thousand cavalry. With these he quitted the Gallic coast, and, after some delay, occasioned chiefly by an attempt to perform the passage under cover of night, the whole armament arrived at the point where the previous debarkation had taken place. No enemy appeared, on this occasion, to dispute the landing. The natives, indeed, alarmed at the numbers and magnitude of the shipping, had retreated with arms in their hands, and Cæsar was, in consequence, permitted to establish, for the second time, a camp upon the shores of Kent. But although the Romans met with no immediate resistance, the Britons were by no means subdued. On the contrary, they offered to the invaders, during the whole of the summer, a steady and determined opposition, which failed of success chiefly through the absence of union and good faith among themselves. One of their chiefs, by name Cassibelaunus, the king, as Cæsar calls him, of the Cassii and Dobuni, displayed, in an eminent

degree, the qualities of a patriot and a hero. Having been chosen, by the neighbouring princes, to be their leader in the war, he behaved, on all occasions, with great valour; and, even when deserted by his fickle allies, persisted in maintaining the contest single-handed. After disputing every inch of ground with the invader, he retreated across the Thames, which he endeavoured to defend by fixing sharp stakes in the bottom of the fords; and, when baffled there also, he devastated the most fertile portions of his own country, with the view of impeding, if he could not arrest, the progress of the enemy. But his courage and skill were alike unavailing. Several tribes whom he had brought under the yoke, not only abandoned him in his need, but joined the Romans, who were conducted to his capital, a rude fortress, situated at no great distance from the site of the present St. Alban's. Here Cassibelaunus endured a siege, trusting to the success of a diversion, in which the few chiefs of Kent, still faithful to the cause of their common country, had agreed to take part. But an attack on the Roman fleet failed; and the imperfect fortifications of a British town offering a feeble resistance to Roman science and discipline, Cassibelaunus, like the rest of the southern chieftains, found it necessary to submit. Caesar did not consider it expedient either to push his conquests further, or to retain an armed hold upon the districts which he had overrun. Having accepted of hostages, and fixed the amount of a tribute which Britain was henceforth to pay, he marched back to the coast, and, before the end of September, had withdrawn with all his forces into Gaul.

Though the victories of the Roman general left him not master of one foot of British ground, the effect of his expedition was to render the Britons themselves, much more than they had previously been, objects of interest to the civilized nations of Greece and Rome.

The islanders, their manners, and the productions of their country, all began to excite the curiosity of the public; and the industry of various writers was, in due time, employed to appease it. Of the works of these writers, many have doubtless perished; but from such as remain, we are enabled at this day to attain to a tolerably correct notion of the social and political condition of our remote ancestors.

A consideration of the languages of the ancient Britons, as these are still spoken in Ireland, in the Highlands of Scotland, and in Wales, leaves no room to question the truth of that theory which attributes to the people themselves a Celtic origin. Some, indeed, as the people of Ireland, the Scottish Highlanders, and the inhabitants of the Isle of Man, are clearly Gauls by descent, their speech being mutually intelligible, and of Gallic formation; whereas others, namely, the Welsh, and the original Cornishmen, are, like the inhabitants of Lower Britany, Cimbri; between whom, and the children of the Gael, little conversational intercourse can be maintained. Yet the Gauls and the Cimbri are, after all, but branches from the same parent stem; the one tribe having followed the other, probably at no great interval, in the tide of emigration, which carried the Celtic families from Asia to the extreme west of Europe. We express ourselves thus, because, were other evidence wanting, we find in the religion of the Celts, as it displayed itself in Britain, ample proof of an oriental origin. The absolute submission of one portion of a nation to another, in an age destitute of the ordinary means of influence, and ignorant of the habits of obedience, can be accounted for only by the prevalence of a system which confines men to hereditary occupations, and vests in the sacerdotal caste a power which is founded in the exclusive possession of knowledge.

At the period when they became objects of serious

inquiry to the Romans, the British Celts were divided into numerous petty nations, of which the names of forty, with the limits of their respective territories, have been preserved by the classic authors. Among these, the inhabitants of such districts as lay nearest to the coasts of Gaul and of Belgium, were by far the most civilized. They wore a dress of their own manufacture, a square mantle, which covered a vest and trousers, or a deeply-plaided tunic of braided cloth. They ornamented their fingers with rings; their necks with chains made of brass or iron. Their houses, like those of their Gallic neighbours, consisted mainly of beams of wood, which being circular in shape, and covered over with thatch, were supported upon stone foundations. They manured their land with marl, and raised corn, not only in sufficient quantities to supply their own wants, but to be used as an article of export; and they preserved it from one harvest to another by storing it in pits, or in the cavities of rocks, where no moisture could penetrate. They were, moreover, numerous, brave, and skilful, particularly in the management of war-chariots, and the taming of wild horses. Widely different was the state of things in the midland and western districts. There, the sole riches of the people consisted in the extent of their pastures and the number of their flocks. They made no use of bread, existing entirely upon flesh and milk; while their only covering was the skins of such animals as they slaughtered for food. As the inquirer pursues his researches in a northerly direction, however, the traces even of incipient civilization become more and more indistinct; in many parts of Caledonia, sheep were altogether unknown, and the painted savage, as he roamed the wilds in a state of almost complete nudity, found a precarious subsistence in the chase alone. But that which, more than any other circumstance, marks the degraded state of barbarism into which the Britons had fallen, is the

fact that all the endearing relations of domestic life were unknown among them. Men and women lived together in a state of promiscuous intercourse, so that the children knew not their parents, nor the parents their children.

Wherever such a state of society prevails, it were vain to search for institutions to which the terms employed in describing the usages of civilized life could, with any propriety, be applied. By the ancient writers, indeed, frequent mention is made of British kings, senators, and nobles, classes of persons which may have existed, in some sense, among the southern hordes; but, in the interior, the government of each tribe was probably occasional rather than constant, its form varying as the humours of the people changed, or as war or peace called different passions into play. There was, however, an influence, which all equally acknowledged, both in the south and in the north, namely, the power of religion, as it was wielded by its appointed guardians. Never, perhaps, has the ingenuity of man invented a more terrible superstition than that to which the Britons were votaries. By means of it, the Druids exercised an unlimited control over the minds and bodies of their countrymen. To them all disputes were referred, and all appeals for the redress of grievances made; while he, who refused to abide by their decision, became subject to the most tremendous of punishments. Sentence of excommunication was pronounced against him, and, being cut off from all intercourse with his fellow men, he was driven forth to perish like a beast of prey, unassisted and alone. Nor did the matter end there: the doctrine of an eternal transmigration of souls being taught and received, the Druids were enabled to superadd the dread of future misery to the experience of the sensible evils to which the contumacious or obstinate became immediately subject

While they exercised this authority over their barbarous countrymen, the Druids are described as practising, in their own persons, the most extraordinary self-denial. They dwelt apart from the rest of the community, in the wildest recesses of the forests, and subsisting entirely upon herbs and water, gave themselves up to the pursuit of knowledge and the worship of the Deity. Such, at least, were the habits of the priests, who, by the mere influence of a curse, secured their holy circles from the polluting entrance of the profane, and who, at midnight or at noon-day, offered up prayers for their country and themselves beneath the branches of a sacred oak. There were, however, others of the same caste, who, as bards and teachers of youth, mixed more familiarly with the world, and of whom one or more was always to be found in the family of a chief. These sang to their wild harps the praises of their patron's valour, accompanied him and his warriors to the field, and roused them to the performance of great actions, by reminding them of the renown of their deceased ancestors.

It is not very easy to determine how far the Druids, considered as a religious body, were or were not infected with the prevalent vice of Polytheism. If Cæsar be regarded as a competent judge, they worshipped the gods of Greece and Rome, under different names; nor are grounds wanting on which to establish a suspicion that every grove, river, and mountain, had its presiding genius. The absence of visible temples, on the other hand, as well as of idols of wood and stone, would seem to imply, that their notions of the Supreme Being were of a more exalted kind than those of the heathen in general.* Be this, however, as it may, their mode of propitiating the God whom they abstained

* I have not forgotten either the ruins of Stonehenge, or the image of wicker-work in which the victims were enclosed. But the former seems to have been a mere circle of stones,

from confining within the walls of a temple built by hands, was not such as we might expect to see practised by pure theists. Human sacrifices were, on great occasions, freely offered, in order that they might judge of events to come from the appearance of the victim's blood, as it flowed from the wound which the consecrated knife had inflicted.

By practising these arts, and affecting a studied mystery as to their tenets, which they never divulged except to the initiated, and of which no written record was permitted to be made, the British Druids succeeded not only in establishing a perfect tyranny over the minds of their countrymen, but in drawing towards themselves the respectful attention of foreigners. Even the enlightened Pliny speaks of them as so profoundly skilled in magic, that the Persians themselves might be regarded as their pupils, while in the language of the stars, not less than in the virtues of plants and herbs, they are represented as being deeply versed. According to their own statements, as these are displayed in the Welsh triads, the great object of their order was "to reform morals, to secure peace, and to encourage goodness;" and the following lesson, which they taught to the people, was unquestionably calculated to promote that end:—"The three first principles of wisdom are, obedience to the laws of God, concern for the welfare of man, and fortitude under the accidents of life." How far they adopted a right method of enforcing these principles, is a totally different question; but that their lessons were received by the people at large with unquestioning deference, we need no further proof than is afforded by the conduct of the Romans towards them. The submission of south Britain was secured at last, only by the extirpation of the Druids.

open to the heavens, and, therefore, no temple; the latter, rather an instrument of destruction, than an object of worship

Such were the Britons, who, by their bravery and perseverance, baffled the attempts of the first and most warlike of the Cæsars. From the period of his departure, to the reign of Claudius, they retained, during the lapse of ninety-seven years, their original independence. Augustus, it is true, thrice announced his intention of completing the conquests which his kinsman had begun, but found himself, on each occasion, restrained from the attempt, by the more urgent affairs of the continent; while Tiberius, professing to believe that the empire was already too extensive, indulged his own indolence by remaining at home. In like manner Caligula, after marching an army to the coast, and exhibiting to the world a fair proof of his childish character, returned to enjoy, at Rome, the honours of an empty triumph. On the accession of Claudius, however, a new scene opened upon the devoted islanders. Instigated by Beric, a British chieftain, whom domestic feuds had expelled from his native country, the emperor commanded Aulus Plautius to convey four legions into Britain, who, together with Vespasian, and supported by the emperor in person, expended seven years in reducing the natives southward of the Thames. Then came Ostorius Scapula, by whom a colony was established at Colchester, and a double line of forts erected along the Avon and the Severn: measures, which at once reduced the conquered tribes to the condition of a province, and checked, in some degree, the inroads of such as still maintained their liberty. Yet was the extent of the Roman successes very limited, and their position, with reference to the natives in their front, far from secure. The Silures of South Wales, under their valiant prince Caractacus, waged an incessant war with the intruders; of which, neither frequent defeats nor the capture of their leader, rendered them weary; indeed, their perseverance was such, that neither Ostorius, nor his

immediate successors, found leisure, during several years, to withdraw their attention from the arrangement of measures purely of defence.

Suetonius Paulinus, a vigilant but harsh commander, at length obtained the province. He saw, or fancied that he saw, in the authority of the Druids, one principal cause of the enthusiasm displayed by the Britons, and eager to strike a blow at the root of their power, he led an expedition against their principal establishment, in the island of Anglesea. The Britons defended the seat of their ancient superstition with desperate gallantry; the women mingling in the ranks of war, and exciting their husbands to acts of valour; but neither the numbers of the barbarians, nor the wild incantations of their priests, proved any match for Roman discipline and skill. Anglesea was reduced, its sacred oaks cut down, and the Druids, who had taken refuge there, consumed in the fires which they had lighted for the purpose of immolating the invaders. Nevertheless, Suetonius was not permitted to turn his important victory to any permanent account. In the midst of his successes information reached him, that the country in his rear had revolted, and he was compelled to march back with all haste, in order to meet and repress the movement.

Returning to the eastward, Suetonius soon found that he had received no exaggerated statement of the condition of his province. An act of cruel wrong done to Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, maddened that powerful nation into the assumption of arms; and the rest of the conquered tribes imitating the example, the whole province was speedily in a flame. Camalodunum, or Colchester, was the first of the Roman colonies on which the storm fell. A temple was erected there to the divinity of Claudius, whom a legend described as the conqueror of Britain; and the Britons, naturally eager to destroy this monument of their shame, attacked

it in overwhelming numbers. It was to no purpose that Petilius, a Roman general, marched with the ninth legion to the assistance of the colony. The legion was annihilated, the town carried by assault, and the garrison, with all who held office under the intruders, slaughtered amidst its ruins.

Encouraged by this success, the Britons marched upon London, which was even then a place of considerable trade, and important as a Roman colony. It shared the fate of Colchester, Suetonius being compelled to withdraw from it, with all who chose to follow his fortunes; after which St. Alban's, one of the most flourishing of the municipal towns, was sacked and burned. Not fewer than seventy thousand persons, of all ages, sexes, and conditions, are stated to have perished in these massacres. But the vengeance of the Romans, though for awhile delayed, overtook the barbarians at last. Having assembled about ten thousand men, Suetonius took up a position, which the Britons, confident in their superior numbers, attacked; and a battle ensued, which ended in the defeat of the assailants, with the loss of eighty thousand men. Such a victory could not but prove decisive of the war. Boadicea, refusing to survive the slaughter of her subjects, put herself to death, and the yoke, which the Britons had endeavoured to cast aside, was more securely rivetted than before.

Important as the issue of this battle was, it did not tend to perpetuate the authority of the general, for, being suspected of excessive severity, which drove the people into rebellion, he was almost immediately recalled. His three successors, Turpilianus, Trebellius, and Bolanus, conducted the affairs of the province with great mildness. They made no attempt to push their conquests beyond the limits at which they had already attained, but laboured by a mild yet equitable administration of the laws, to reconcile the minds of the

provincials to their fate. With the accession of Vespasian, however, to the imperial throne, a new era commenced. Petilius Cerealis, to whom Britain was assigned, led his forces against the Brigantes, whom, after a struggle of five years' continuance, he subdued; while Julius Paulinus, his successor, was, in the course of three years, almost equally victorious over the Silures. But it was to Cneius Julius Agricola, the father-in-law of the historian Tacitus, that Rome owed her most extensive and permanent conquests over Britain. That illustrious chief, after a second time reducing Anglesea, led his forces towards the north; and overrunning all the intermediate country, carried his triumphant eagles towards the foot of the Grampian mountains. There he fought a great battle, and obtained a decisive victory over a Caledonian prince, named Galgacus; of which the consequences were long felt, in the absence of all hostile movements on the part of the vanquished.

α) Great as his renown in war undoubtedly was, Agricola deserves a place in the temple of fame as much on account of his prudence as a civil governor, as in justice to his merits as a general. Wherever he went, he laboured to introduce among the natives a taste for the refinements of civilized life. He persuaded the chiefs to abandon their haunts amid the forests, and to establish themselves in the vicinity of Roman colonies. He prevailed upon them to lay aside their rude mantle, and to assume the Roman toga. Houses, baths, and temples, in the Roman fashion, were built for them, and their children were carefully instructed in the Roman language, and Roman manners. By these means, not less than by the terror of his arms, he broke their martial spirit, and he effectually degraded them ere long into the condition of servile and effeminate provincials. Under Agricola, a frontier to the Roman empire was established, by the erection of a

line of works between the friths of Clyde and of Forth, while the districts within that line were rendered secure, by the establishment of camps and fortresses wherever the condition of the tribes seemed to require the presence of any armed force among them. Nor, in enumerating the many services which he did to this country, must we forget to mention that Agricola added much to the geographical knowledge of his age, by circumnavigating the island, and opening a communication with Ireland, which gave such consistency and vigour to the imperial government, that it continued, long after his departure, to work of its own accord.

(A) Of the immediate successors of Agricola, in the administration of British affairs, it is not necessary to speak at large. If we except an occasional irruption of the northern savages, of which, whatever knowledge we possess is derived exclusively from medals, the island enjoyed under them a profound repose; till the decay of the colossal power, of which it constituted a dependency, placed its inhabitants in a new position, and exposed them to many vicissitudes of fortune. When, therefore, we mention that for a brief space a Roman town was established at Inverness, that being difficult of situation, it was abandoned, and a second wall, from the Solway Frith to the mouth of the Tyne, erected under Hadrian; that Lollius Urbicus, *proprætor* in the reign of Antoninus, raised a similar fortification from the Frith to the Clyde, and gave to it the name of Antoninus's wall; and that Severus, after chastising the Caledonians, erected his celebrated rampart near to that of Hadrian; we shall have said all that the nature of this part of our subject seems to demand. It is necessary, however, before we pass on to other matters, that some account should be given of the system of civil and military government under which the Roman Britons lived.

When the conquest of the country reached its full

extent, Britain was placed under the general control of a prefect, with whom was associated, as a sort of colleague or spy, the *quæstor*, or principal officer of finance. The island was not, however, given up to the immediate management of the prefect; it was, on the contrary, divided into six lesser departments, at the head of each of which was a deputy-governor, while these departments contained within themselves thirty-three *civitates* or townships. As a measure of more precaution, it was decreed that the offices of *prefect*, *quæstor*, and *vicarius* or *proprefect*, should always be held by foreigners; who, besides receiving their commissions from the emperor, were prohibited from intermarrying with native Britons, or acquiring among them lands, houses, or slaves. The *civitates*, on the other hand, were permitted to elect their own municipal officers, who seem to have been almost invariably Britons. Great care was, however, taken that the officers of one *civitas* should not interfere with those of another; nor, indeed, exercise any authority beyond the bounds of what may be termed their own boroughs. The law which these officials undertook to administer was presumed to emanate from Rome, though there is good reason to believe that it proceeded much more frequently from local custom, or individual caprice.

While the *quæstor* superintended the management of the revenue, which arose from imposts on various articles of trade, and a poll-tax, the tenth of the produce of mines, and a proportion of corn, hay, and cattle, the prefect combined in his own person the powers of supreme civil ruler, and commander-in-chief of the army. Of the ordinary amount of force allotted for the military occupation of Britain, no exact computation can be formed. We find the number of legions varying at different epochs, according to the state of the island, or the circumstances of other provinces; but whatever its strength might be, great care was

taken to exclude from the ranks of the local army all native-born Britons. The policy of the Romans, indeed, was, in this respect, exceedingly sound. While they filled the British garrisons with cohorts, composed of Latins, Germans, and Gauls, they enrolled corps of Britons for service in Gaul, Germany, and Italy; thus establishing at all points, throughout the compass of their extensive dominions, an armed force which had with the inhabitants no feelings in common. The consequence was, that though, from time to time, a military sedition arose, of which it was the object to advance some favourite commander to the imperial throne, the authority of Rome itself ran little risk of being disputed; because a mercenary army, composed entirely of strangers, experienced no inducement to draw the sword in vindication of the rights of men whom they regarded as their vassals.

I have spoken of *civitates* as established throughout the six provinces of Britain, to the number of thirty-three, where they enjoyed the privilege of choosing their own magistrates, and being governed by their own customs. It is necessary to add, that these were not all possessed of the same rank, nor composed, if I may so express myself, of the same materials. At the head of the list stood the colonies,—establishments of veteran legionaries, whose courage and faithful services the emperor rewarded by allotting to them a portion of the land which they had conquered.* These amounted in all to nine, and formed each of them a miniature representation of the parent city; the same customs prevailing in both, the same laws being acknowledged, and the same titles conferred on the magistrates and rulers. Next in point of rank, though in some respects on a footing of equality as to privileges, were the

* The colonists held their lands by a sort of feudal tenure, that is to say, they and their followers were bound to take up arms whenever called upon.

municipia, of which the inhabitants, besides being exempt from the operation of the imperial statutes, enjoyed all the rights of Roman citizenship, with the prerogative of enacting laws for their own guidance. They were never more than two in number, namely, St. Alban's and York; whereas, of towns, to which was granted the *jus Latii* or Latin right, Britain could boast of ten. The inhabitants of such towns elected their own magistrates, who retained office for a year, at the expiration of which period they were entitled to claim the freedom of the capital; an arrangement which, in due time, secured to all the chief men that great object of provincial ambition. The remaining twelve towns were termed stipendiary, and, as the name denotes, were liable to the payment of tribute; but, from this, as well as from the necessity of receiving governors of prætorial nomination, they were, by the favour of Caracalla, ultimately relieved.

At the distance of so many ages, it is impossible to discover by whom the light of Christianity was first introduced into Britain. The writers of the dark ages have assigned that honour, some to St. Peter, some to St. Paul, and others to Joseph of Arimathea; but the evidence to which they appeal in support of their respective statements is so vague and unsatisfactory, that the statements themselves appear alike unworthy of credit. It is, however, quite certain that the foundations of the true faith were laid at a very early period in this island. Its proximity to Gaul, indeed, where the Gospel was undoubtedly preached by the apostles, and the presence of a foreign army, of which numbers had heard the glad tidings of salvation in their own land, give great weight to the observations of Tertullian; from whom we learn, that before the close of the second century Christianity was professed, not only within the limits of the Roman provinces, but in countries whither the Roman eagles never penetrated. This account is ren-

dered more credible by the unquestioned state of the British church, towards the end of the third, and beginning of the fourth centuries. At the former date, contemporary writers class it, on all occasions, with the churches of Spain and Gaul; while, at the council of Arles, which was held A.D. 314, we find that three British bishops were present; a conclusive proof that then, at least, a regular hierarchy had been established in the island.

Such was the moral and political state of Britain during the interval which occurred, between its final subjugation by Agricola, and the downfall of the Roman power. Among its haughty masters, seditions and revolts, from time to time, took place, and Britain, in the progress of these, had more than once the honour of giving an emperor to Rome; but such changes affected, in no degree, the condition of the natives, who had learned to wear the chain by which they were bound, not only without shame, but with ostentation. So long, indeed, as the conquerors continued to defend them from the Caledonians, they paid to the existing authorities an unrepining obedience: not because they entertained for them any feelings of affection, but because they were too unwarlike to aim at an independence, which could be purchased only by danger. But these days of effeminate reliance on the exertions of others, drew gradually to a close. The Romans, beset on all hands by fierce and barbarous enemies, found themselves compelled to concentrate for the defence of the capital; and Britain, because both of its remote situation, and of the little value which was attached to it, was among the first of the distant provinces which they judged it prudent to relinquish. Of the consequences of that step, as it affected the inhabitants of this island, some account will be given in the next chapter.



On the preceding page are given figures of some curious ancient British antiquities which have been discovered in modern times.

Fig. 1. A battle-axe, which, when not in use, was slung to the girdle by means of a leathern thong, passed through the ring. The heads of these axes have been frequently found: they are formed of a mixed metal, compounded of copper and tin.

Fig. 2. A golden tiara, or ornament for the head, belonging to the chief of the Druids.

Fig. 3. The *Liath Meisiceth*, called the magical stone of speculation. In the centre is a lens of polished rock-crystal: this was evidently used as a burning-glass, when the priests wished it to be believed that they brought fire from heaven.

Fig. 4. A brazen helmet, worn by a horse-soldier.

Fig. 5. The cornan, or crescent, a sacred symbol, carried by the officiating Druid during the first quarter of the moon, which its crescent-like form represents.

Fig. 6. A spear, or dart, which was either hurled at the enemy and withdrawn by means of a leathern thong, or used in close quarters as a sword.

Figs. 7, 8. Specimens of British pottery in baked clay.

All these subjects have been taken from authentic sources, and form an interesting accompaniment to the historical text.

*A.D. 585 The Heptarchy
597 Conversion of Ethelbert
827 Egbert ends the Heptarchy
836 Ethelwulf
850 The Danes first winter in England.*

CHAPTER II.

THE BRITONS DESERTED BY THE ROMANS.—ESTABLISH INDEPENDENT REPUBLICS.—MONARCHIES ERECTED.—INTESTINE WARS.—ARRIVAL OF THE SAXONS.—THEIR CONQUESTS, MANNERS, RELIGION, AND CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY.

[A. D. 300 to A. D. 700.]

FOR the space of something more than seventy years from the death of Severus, we find no mention made of Britain by the ancient annalists. It is probable, therefore, that she enjoyed, during that interval, an exemption from foreign and domestic broils; but, towards the close of the third century, new enemies began to assail her, who, in the progress of time and events, were destined to play a conspicuous part in her history. We allude to the Franks and Saxons, two barbarous nations, which, possessing the whole line of coast from the mouth of the Rhine to the Cimbrian Chersonesus, swept into their own ports the commerce of the narrow seas, and insulted, by predatory expeditions, the shores of Gaul and Britain. To oppose their inroads a new office was created by the emperors Dioclesian and Maximian, under the title of Count of the Saxon shore, which conferred upon its possessor the command of all the land and sea forces, from the mouth of the Humber to the extreme point of Cornwall. But though wielded by more than one man of distinguished ability, the power thus created was not found adequate to attain its object. In proportion as the struggle of parties became more and more inveterate within, the barbarians pressed upon the limits of the empire with increasing violence from without; and Britain, like other remote provinces, became, on all her frontiers, a scene of constant and ferocious warfare. During

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the reign of Constantius, the Picts and Scots* committed grievous ravages on the north and west; which, though repelled by Constantine and his immediate successors, were renewed in the times of Julian. Under Valentinian the horrors of these inroads were increased by the reappearance of the Saxon pirates; who spread the flame of devastation along the right bank of the Thames, and threatened with destruction London itself. It is true that Theodosius severely chastised the invaders, and that Maximus, usurper as he was, taught the Scots and Picts to respect him; but the annihilation of his legions on the plains of Pannonia struck a blow at the military strength of the island, which it never fully recovered. From the year 388, indeed, the old historians tell one continued tale of slaughters, burnings, and rapine, which the Britons, despoiled by their foreign defenders, were wholly unable to restrain.

Time passed, and the mighty fabric of Roman power, in the erection of which so many ages had been expended, was shaken to its foundation. The cohorts, which had hitherto kept Britain under control, were recalled for the defence of Italy, and, at the bloody battle of Pollentia, gave proof that neither their discipline nor their courage were diminished. A portion of them, moreover, returned, and were again successful over the Picts; but these found themselves, within two years, cut off from all communication with the emperor, between whom and their most advanced stations hordes of Germans had interposed. Under

* Concerning the origin of these tribes, there is a great diversity of opinion; but that which Dr. Lingard has advanced appears to be by far the most rational. That able, though prejudiced, historian, considers them to be the same with the Caledonians and Mæatae, of whom, it is very certain, we hear no more, after the Scots and Picts occupy the island; though of their extermination or departure from the country no mention is made by any chronicler.

these circumstances the legionaries set up an emperor of their own, under whose guidance they abandoned the island; and clearing Gaul of the barbarians, established, for a brief season, his authority in the west. But the civil war which ensued, and which ended in the destruction of the British Augustus, is in no way connected with the history of Britain itself; where events were hastening forward, which years of oppression had prepared the minds of the people to desire and to expect.

The decaying authority of the emperors had, for a long while back, left the Britons to the mercy of a succession of licentious and avaricious deputies. For awhile the people submitted unresistingly; but when patience proved ineffectual to soften the hearts of these tyrants, they began, at last, to watch an opportunity of casting aside the yoke. That opportunity presented itself during the absence of Constantine and the legions. The people now, as if by one accord, replaced themselves under the guidance of the magistracy of the civitates, deposed the governors of provinces, and established thirty independent republics in their room. They then turned their arms against the barbarians, whom the departure of the Roman soldiers had stimulated to fresh acts of hostility, and defeating them in various encounters, drove them from the country. When intelligence of these proceedings reached the Emperor Honorius at Ravenna, he expressed neither sorrow nor indignation. Feeling, on the contrary, that his authority over Britain had ceased, he made a merit of acceding to arrangements which he possessed no power to set aside; and, desiring the several townships "to provide for their own defence," gave a sort of equivocal assent to the new order of things. It is certain that the Romans never afterwards attempted to recover the influence which they had thus suddenly lost.

The ablest chronologists have fixed the year 410 as that in which the Romans evacuated Britain. From that date up to 495, its inhabitants maintained a feverish independence. The republics, however, which at first sprang up, soon degenerated into monarchies, and an excessive jealousy arising among them, the flames of intestine war were kindled from one end of the country to the other. To add to the misery of such a state of things, famine and pestilence swept the land, carrying off multitudes of those whom the sword had spared; while the Scots and Picts, taking advantage of the confusion, began again, with destructive fury, to renew their inroads. "The country," says Gildas, "though weak against its foreign enemies, was brave and unconquerable in civil warfare. Kings were appointed, but not by God; they who were more cruel than the rest attained to the highest dignities." It was under these afflicting circumstances that certain of the maritime states applied for the assistance of Ætius, the Roman commander in Gaul. But the dangers which threatened his own province, from the successes of Attila, hindered Ætius from listening to their prayer; and they became, in consequence, a prey, first to the most ambitious of their own countrymen, and ultimately to a band of foreign rovers.

The wars of the British princes appear to have led, about 426, to the establishment of a federal monarchy, at the head of which was Gwertheyrn, or Vortigern, a man of boundless ambition, and great cruelty. He had, however, a formidable rival in Ambrosius, the son, according to Nennius, of a Roman consul; while of his immediate vassals, very many paid to him but an unquiet and reluctant obedience. Various battles continued, accordingly, to be fought; which, though they generally ended in favour of the usurper, taught him to look elsewhere than to the native militia for the defence of his throne. With this view he summoned,

in 449, a general council of the chiefs, and availing himself of a report which then prevailed, that the Scots and Picts were again in motion, persuaded them to sanction the enrolment under his banner of a standing mercenary army. It chanced that there arrived, not long after the meeting of the council, three Saxon cyules, or war-vessels, on the coast, on board of which were embarked two chiefs, named Hengist and Horsa, with fifteen or sixteen hundred followers. With these Gwertheyrn, by consent of his nobles, contracted an alliance, and receiving them into his pay, gave up to them, as their future residence, the fertile island of Thanet. They, on their part, undertook to support the king's authority against all his enemies, and to give the aid of their practised arms, in driving the Scots and Picts back into their fastnesses.

The services of the Saxons were, for awhile, eminently useful. They drove back the enemy beyond the Wear, in Durham, and gained so completely upon the confidence of Gwertheyrn, that to the proposal of bringing reinforcements from Germany no opposition was offered. At first little jealousy seems to have been excited, for the recruits to the foreign army came in by handfuls; but when, on one occasion, a force of five thousand men made good their landing, the men of Kent caught the alarm. It was, however, now too late. The Saxons became, day by day, more loud in their complaints, that the subsidies, which had been promised, were withheld; while the Britons began, with great justice, to surmise, that permanent conquest, not a temporary maintenance, was their object.

A tradition has come down to us, it must be confessed, on very equivocal authority, that Hengist early won the support of Gwertheyrn, by bestowing upon him the hand of his beautiful daughter Rowena. However this may be, it is certain that the king laboured to restrain the discontent of his subjects, and preserved

the semblance of peace, between them and the intruders, long after the feeling of confidence had expired on both sides. Things were in this state when Hengist and Horsa, whose projects were now matured, invited the principal nobility of Britain to a banquet. The Britons, with unaccountable rashness, accepted the invitation, and repairing, without weapons, to the place of meeting, were, to the number of three hundred, put to death.

This atrocious act, so far from breaking the spirit of the Britons, roused them at once to exertion. They took the field, headed by Gwertheyrn, and, engaging the intruders at Ailesford, obtained some revenge in the slaughter of the ferocious Horsa. But the fortune of war was, on that occasion, against them, and attributing this circumstance, probably not without reason, to the extreme unpopularity of their leader, they dethroned Gwertheyrn, and set up his son, Vortimer, in his stead. Vortimer, either from necessity, or as a matter of prudence, appears to have protracted the war; at least, we read of no other engagement taking place for the space of two years: but when it did occur, the result proved eminently advantageous to the natives, who defeated their oppressors with great slaughter. The battle of Crayford was fought in the year 457. According to Nennius, it ended so disastrously for Hengist, that he was compelled to evacuate the country, to which he did not return till after the death of Vortimer, in 465*. At the latter period, however, we find him obtaining a great victory at Stonar, not far from the spot where he had originally landed; after which, the utmost exertions of the native chieftains failed to dislodge him. He made himself master of the greatest part of Kent, which he transmitted, as a separate kingdom, to his posterity†.

* There is a tradition that the town of Leyden was founded by Hengist, in the interval between 457 and 465.

† Too much has been said of the extent of Hengist's con-

While Hengist was thus earning a principality in Kent, Ella, another Saxon adventurer, allured by the achievements of his countrymen, landed with three sons, and a small but gallant army, on the shores of Sussex. Like his predecessor in conquest, he seems to have been content with establishing his supremacy over a moderate portion of country; at least we do not hear of his penetrating far into the interior. Nevertheless, he is spoken of in the Chronicles, as superior, in 490, to any Saxon chief, at that time in England; a tolerably conclusive proof, that of Hengist's victories and excesses much more has been said by modern writers than the truth will warrant. The fame of both Hengist and Ella falls, however, into insignificance, before that of Cerdic, who, in 495, invaded England at the head of a formidable army. This chief, concerning the exact site of whose landing much doubt prevails, made himself master, by degrees, of the Isle of Wight, of Hampshire, and of Buckinghamshire; and left behind a son, not less fortunate than himself, in the conquest of Somersetshire, Wiltshire, and Oxfordshire. In like manner the left bank of the Thames became the scene of many battles, which ended, in 530, in the establishment of Erkenwin in Essex; while Uffa, pushing his conquests beyond that frontier, erected a kingdom for himself out of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, and the Isle of Ely. But it was not in the east and south alone that the fierce intruders established permanent settlements. Ida, the leader of a band of Angles, appearing in the north, overran all the country as far to the southward as the

quests, and of the effeminacy of the people over whom they were achieved. The former never passed the limits which we have assigned to them; and of the latter, it may suffice to state, that in spite of a foreign invasion and intestine wars, the Britons were, at that period, in a condition to despatch 12,000 men into Gaul, then struggling for independence against the Visigoths.

Tees, while the districts between the Tees and the Humber became the prey of Seomil, and his son, Lilla. Last of all, a band of adventurers, following Cridda, as their general, crossed the Humber, and, after clearing the coasts of the Britons, pushed their conquests into the very heart of the island. These were, in general, called Mercians, perhaps from the marshy district in which they first settled; though some took the name of Middle Angles, as indicating both their original settlements, and the central position of the country which they had overrun.

From the first arrival of Hengist to the last successes of Cridda, a period of more than a hundred and fifty years intervened. During the whole of that interval, the Britons had displayed both courage and perseverance in the defence of their liberties; but among the chieftains and petty princes no unanimity existed, and, like their forefathers, when assailed by the Romans, they were defeated in detail. Neither the gallantry of Aurelius Ambrosius, in Kent, nor the heroism of Natanleod, in Hampshire, availed to stem the torrent which poured in upon their respective dominions; while Urien, in the north, after a long, and sometimes a doubtful struggle with Ida, perished, not by the swords of the Saxons, but by the treachery of a confederate. One warrior, indeed, if any credit is due to the songs of the bards, had wellnigh rolled back the tide of conquest: we allude to Arthur, of whom the tradition still remains, that he defeated the barbarians in twelve successive battles. But even Arthur, after a glorious reign of five-and-twenty years, fell by the hand of a kinsman, and his distracted country became more than ever a prey to its fierce invaders. The result may be stated in few words. Driven from the more open and fertile districts, such of the Britons as preferred independence to slavery, took refuge in Cornwall, Wales, Cumberland, and Strathclyde; or passed over to

Armorica, where they established themselves along the sea-coasts, and gave to the neighbouring towns, of which they soon effected the conquest, the general name of Britany.

The Anglo-Saxons (for under that common head Angles and Picts, as well as Saxons, came in due time to be classed,) were thus left masters of the whole of the British low countries, from the coast of Devon, on the one hand, to the banks of the Forth, on the other. The immediate effect of these victories was to re-introduce a state of barbarism scarcely less degrading than that which is described by the classic writers. For awhile, indeed, their object seemed to be rather to lay waste than to conquer, for wherever they went, towns and villages were consigned to the flames, and their inhabitants slaughtered. But the work of devastation was at last checked by views of personal interest. The dwellings of the Britons were needed for the use of the victors, and the lives of the owners were spared, in order that, by their labour, the soil might be cultivated. Hence it came about, that as the Saxons extended their conquests more widely, the buildings were permitted to stand; while all captives, whether taken in battle, or found secreted in the woods, were, without distinction of age, sex, or condition, divided, together with the land, among the principal warriors. These became immediately the property of their lord, subject to his caprice, and transferable at his pleasure; and that the same fate attended their descendants down to the eleventh century, the authentic records of *Doomsday Book* assure us.

Such were the means by which a new and barbarous people supplanted, in a large portion of England, the original inhabitants, and such the consequences, as far as the ancient race were affected, of this remarkable revolution. With respect to the number of sovereignties established by the Saxons themselves, we find that

they varied at different periods; each leader of a fresh horde erecting his conquests into a kingdom, so soon as he had carried them to the utmost limits which circumstances would allow. Thus, in the early part of Hengist's career, there existed but one Saxon principality, that of Kent; to which, in 500, was added a second by Ella, in Sussex. Cerdic, by the erection of Wessex in 519, converted the duarchy into a triarchy; the reduction of east Anglia rendered it a tetrarchy; and by that of Essex, it became a pentarchy. So also the successes of Ida, in the establishment of the Angles in Bernicia, carried on the number to a hexarchy; which, in 560, by the exploits of the northern Ella beyond the Tees, became a heptarchy; while the march of a portion of the Angles across the Humber, in 586, and the consolidation of the kingdom of Mercia, presents us with an octarchy. It is not, however, to be imagined that, among these eight petty sovereigns, there existed, even from the first, a perfect equality of rank, and perhaps of authority. One, on the contrary, there always was, who, with the title of Britwalda, (Wielder of Britain,) appears to have been acknowledged by the rest as in some sort their chief; but whose office, as it was not hereditary, carried with it few privileges, and was continually liable to be taken away by those who gave it. Still, the possession of this empty honour seems to have early given rise to divisions and strifes among the Saxon sovereigns of England; at least the first intestine war of which chroniclers speak, is by them attributed to the desire of one prince to deprive another of this envied dignity. Ethelbert, the fourth king of Kent, having been taught to believe that the office of Britwalda belonged of right to the representative of Hengist, led an army against Ceawlin, king of Wessex, by whom it was actually held, and sustained, at Wimbledon, a severe defeat, from which he with difficulty escaped alive.

From this period, down to the commencement of the ninth century, the history of the Anglo-Saxon princes consists of little else than a detail of barbarous wars, and fearful cruelties. Victorious over their ancient enemies, they turned their arms one against the other, and committed upon their countrymen and kin, without compunction, atrocities similar to those with which they had formerly visited the Britons. The result of these struggles was to throw, sometimes into the hands of one, sometimes into those of another, an insecure superiority. Ceawlin, for example, besides formally annexing Sussex to his own dominions, retained the office of Britwalda till the year 591, when a powerful confederacy was entered into against him, and he lost both his dignity and his life. Ethelbert, king of Kent, his former rival, now became Britwalda, of which he discharged the duties till his death; but to his son, Eadbald, a youth of violent passions, similar honours were not paid; for the office was, in 616, assumed first by Redwald, king of the East Angles, and afterwards by Edwin, king of Northumbria. Not even by Edwin, however, though one of the most powerful of the early monarchs, was it transmitted as an hereditary possession to his children. On the contrary, the kingdom of Northumbria itself, which, under him, included both Bernicia and Deira, suffered, at his demise, a partition; and was restored to its integrity, only after a bloody war, by Oswald, the son of a monarch whom he had dethroned. But it is needless to continue a narrative of events, which, besides being involved in great obscurity, could not, if detailed at length, convey either instruction or amusement to the reader. It will be more to the purpose if we give an account of the only occurrence upon which, throughout three centuries of crime and misery, the eye of the philanthropist desires to rest.

We have, as yet, taken little or no notice of the

peculiar customs of that people, before whose victorious armies the Britons were compelled to flee to the mountains. The limits of this history are not, indeed, such as to permit my entering very deeply into these matters; but, as a right understanding of much that is to follow can scarcely be attained by such as are wholly ignorant of them, it may not be amiss if I endeavour, in few words, to give of them at least a general outline. The young reader may therefore be informed, that the Saxons were robust in their make, tall, at least as compared with the Romans, possessed of fair complexions, blue eyes, and, in almost all instances, light or sandy hair. They were distinguished, from the earliest ages, for indomitable courage and great ferocity. In their social state they acknowledged four ranks or classes of men, among whom intermarriages rarely, if ever, occurred; namely, their nobles, their freemen, their freedmen, and their slaves. They were particularly jealous of the honour of their wives, and punished such as polluted it with the greatest severity. In ordinary times they acknowledged no single chief, but were governed by an aristocracy; from among the members of which, in the event of war, they chose a king. But the authority of the sovereign lasted only while hostilities continued: at their close, he returned to his original station among the nobles.

The Saxons, like another race, of whom I shall have occasion by-and-by to speak, delighted in the perpetration of cruelties, and were themselves regardless of danger. They carried on their predatory warfare chiefly by sea; launching their vessels most cheerfully during the prevalence of the wildest storms, because they took it for granted that their intended victims would, at such moments, be least prepared to escape or to resist them. When the first of these bands arrived in England, they came under the guidance of

two nobles, whom they had themselves elected as leaders in a piratical expedition; and whom they continued to obey, only because the war, in which they became engaged, lasted during the lifetime of those who began it. It was this circumstance, indeed, and this only, which secured to the several chiefs, by whom Britain was invaded, the prolonged authority which they respectively exercised; and enabled them so far to innovate upon the customs of their country, as to establish in each of their families a sort of hereditary monarchy. As will be seen, however, in the course of this history, the right of the nobles to elect their king was never formally laid aside. On the contrary, though the line of succession might be, for the most part, preserved, the circumstance was owing rather to a conviction of its convenience, than to any belief in the indefeasible right of one man to exercise authority over others, by virtue of his lineage.

The religion of the Anglo-Saxons, as they imported it into Britain, was a wild and hideous polytheism, which demanded from its votaries, among other rites, the occasional offering up of human victims. Of some of their gods we retain a remembrance in the names which still attach to the days of the week. They worshipped the Sun, thence our Sunday; the Moon, thence our Monday; Tiw, thence Tuesday; Woden, thence Wednesday; Thurse, thence Thursday; Friga, thence Friday; and Saterne, whence Saturday. They had, moreover, two goddesses; namely, Rheda, to whom sacrifices were offered in March, and Eostre, whose festival was celebrated, like our Easter, in April. All these were common to the various Saxon tribes; as were also Faul, the spirit of evil, and Elf, a female, and a benignant deity. But there were others, peculiar to certain clans, such as Hertha, or mother earth, who appears to have been worshipped only by the Angles. Tacitus describes the temple of this deity as situated

in a grove; whence she was removed once a year in a vehicle, covered with a cloth, and carried by cows, with great ceremony, from place to place. So long as the procession lasted, wars and commotions were forgotten: at its conclusion, she was committed to the care of servants, who washed her, her vehicle, and the sacred garment, in a lake which none but the priests were permitted to visit. When this was accomplished, and the goddess about to withdraw again into her temple, the priests took care to ensure the silence of their officials touching what they had seen, by casting them, bound hand and foot, into the deep water.

Of the ceremonies used by the Saxons, in the celebration of their worship, we know but little. They seem, indeed, to have consisted of periodical oblations; at least we find that, in February, they offered cakes to their gods, and, in November, dried or salted meats. September also appears, from its name, Halig monath, or holy month, to have been devoted to religious purposes; as was Christmas-day, when the year was supposed to begin, and they celebrated the Geol or Jule with a mixture of devotion and conviviality. But the Saxons had many other objects of worship, and, of course, modes of adoration, than these. Almost every temple, indeed, had its own idol, and every idol had his own religious rites and ceremonies. Among these, the largest and most remarkable was Irminsula,—the figure of an armed warrior, holding in its right-hand a banner, on which a red rose was conspicuous, while its left presented a balance. The helmet of this image was surmounted with a cock, as a crest; on its breast was engraved a bear; and the shield, depending from its shoulders, exhibited a lion in a field full of flowers. That idol the priests carried with them into the field of battle; and they sacrificed before it, when the combat came to an end, both the prisoners taken from the

enemy, and the cowards who had deserted their standards*.

Like other heathen nations, the Saxons were great seekers after omens, and firm believers in lucky and unlucky days. Magic they affected to cultivate, as well as the art of foretelling events to come, by consulting the stars. To this they had recourse, in an especial manner, during war; though a more frequent mode of determining how a battle might be expected to end was, by opposing a captive in single fight against one of their own warriors. If the captive perished, then they engaged with a certainty of success; if their own champion fell, their courage fell with him. Even the sinister prediction of fate, however, was incapable of restraining them from the battle; though, like other prophetic declarations, it may have sometimes contributed to bring about its own accomplishment.

The Anglo-Saxons reckoned time by nights instead of days, and by winters instead of years. Their months were all lunar; while their years, which began, as I have just stated, at Christmas, they divided into two seasons only, summer and winter; of these, the latter, commencing in October, included six of the months throughout which the days are shortest; the remainder were all included under the head of summer months.

Whether the Saxons brought with them, into England, any books, or even the knowledge of letters, is extremely doubtful. The oldest of the manuscripts which have been preserved, is written in the Roman character, and bears date after their conversion to Christianity; yet there are one or two circumstances which lead to something like a belief, that it is by no means the first which had obtained circulation among themselves. The old language of the Saxons contains

* The seat of this idol was at Eresberg, on the Danube. In Britain, as in all other places, they could exhibit only pictures, or representations.

words significant both of the art of writing and of a volume after it has been compiled. From the former, indeed, *gwritan* or *awritan*, we derive our term to *write*, and from the latter, *boc* or *bog*, the term *book*; while the two letters, *th* and *w*, which occur in the manuscripts already alluded to, are clearly not Roman. It is, therefore, not improbable that they did carry with them, from Germany, both written records, and a character of their own; and that the latter was Runic.

In this state the Anglo-Saxons had lived,—the slaves of a debasing superstition, and of all the evil passions which such a superstition is calculated to excite,—when, towards the close of the fifth century, a circumstance occurred, in which the hand of God may be most distinctly traced. Gregory, surnamed the Great, whose commiseration for their benighted state had been excited while he yet filled a private station, no sooner found himself seated in the Papal chair, than he determined to send missionaries among them, and to attempt their conversion. To discharge a duty, under all circumstances arduous, but, considering the ferocity of the Angles, beset, in this case, by more than common difficulties, he made choice of a Roman monk, named Augustine, whom he commanded, with forty companions, to carry over into England the glad tidings of Salvation. Augustine, though at first reluctant to undertake the charge, was prevailed upon, in the end, to brave all dangers. He embarked for his spiritual province, which he reached, in safety, some time in the year 597; and, under circumstances more auspicious than he had reason to anticipate, immediately began his labours.

The sceptre of Kent, into which the pious fraternity had entered, was swayed at this time by king Ethelbert, the same who disputed with the king of Wessex the right to be treated as Britwalda, and, though thwarted in early youth, eventually gained his end. This prince, having married a daughter of Charibert, king of Paris,

was prepared to treat the missionaries at least with respect; for his wife had not only been educated in the principles of Christianity, but continued to profess the faith, and to worship according to the ritual of the Christian church. There was, moreover, a considerable portion of the population of his kingdom, to whom the name of the Redeemer was not unknown. Though reduced to bondage, such of the Britons as still lingered about their ancient homes were, there is good ground to suppose, for the most part believers; whose modes of acting, if they failed to bring over their masters to the new faith, had, at all events, made its claims to public notice generally known. Under these circumstances, the position of Augustine proved to be much more advantageous than he had a right to anticipate. The king, it is true, received him at first with caution, making choice of a seat under an oak, in the open air, as their place of meeting; and taking all such additional precautions as his priests pointed out, for the purpose of guarding against the spells and incantations of the strangers. But whatever might then be wanting, on the part of Ethelbert, the zeal of queen Bertha more than made good. The missionaries were comfortably lodged in the old church of St. Martin's. Free scope was given to them for preaching every where the doctrine of Salvation; and they had, ere long, the happiness to bring about the conversion of no less a personage than the sovereign himself. It needed no more than this happy occurrence to render their future labours comparatively light. The nobles, and people at large, made haste to follow the example of the monarch, insomuch that Kent became, ere long, in profession, if not in reality, a Christian nation.

From Kent the religion of Christ soon made its way to Essex, of which Sebert, the nephew of Ethelbert, was then king. Like his royal relative, Sebert received it with gladness, becoming himself a convert, and

encouraging his subjects in like manner to believe. It is true that, on the demise of these two princes, paganism again asserted its superiority, and that Augustine himself considerably impeded the triumph of Divine truth, by engaging in fierce and useless controversy with the British clergy. But neither the mistaken zeal of the missionary, nor the apostacy of his first disciples, sufficed to arrest the progress of the great work. In 626, Edwin, with the aid of his council, established Christianity as the religion of Northumbria. It was abjured, to be sure, soon afterwards, by certain turbulent princes, who slew Edwin in battle, and dismembered his sovereignty. But Oswald, after restoring the crown to its former influence, called in the aid of a bishop from Icolmkill, and, in 634, again reared the cross upon the ruins of idolatry. From that period the true faith made steady progress towards universal supremacy throughout the island: encumbered it was with many superstitious observances, and rendered, by the agents of the Roman pontiff, an instrument of advancing his power; but the effect which it produced upon the morals and manners of the people, is described by ancient writers as marvellous. Long before the dissolution of what has been erroneously denominated the heptarchy, the Anglo-Saxons of the plains, not less than the Britons among the hills, were almost universally believers in the Gospel of Christ.

- 871 Alfred King of Wessex
 878 Alfred defeats Guthrum
 900 Edward the Elder
 920 Edward unites Mercia to his Kingdom.
 925 Athelstan
 927 Athelstan reduces Northumbria
 938 Athelstan, King of Engl. defeats Aelf
 940 Edmund. Aelf seizes Northumbria
 942 Death of Aelf. Northumbria recovered.

- 946 Edmund is killed by Leo. Edred.
 955 Edwy.
 959 Edgar.
 975 Edward the Martyr.
 978 Edward murdered. Ethelred the Unready
 1002 Massacre of the Danes.

CHAPTER III.

THE SAXONS WAR AGAINST EACH OTHER.—THE KINGDOMS UNITED.—SAXON MONARCHS.—RISE OF THE BENEDICTINE ORDER OF MONKS.—THE NORTHMEN.—DANISH MONARCHS.—EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.—HAROLD.—END OF THE SAXON MONARCHY.

[A. D. 700 to A. D. 1066.]

I STATED, some time ago, that the Saxons had no sooner triumphed over the ancient Britons, than the several communities into which they were distributed began to turn their arms one against another. The necessary consequence of this unnatural warfare was to create continual changes in the political condition of the island. In the year 700, for example, we find that Britain was divided into seventeen principalities; of which seven were governed by Saxon princes, and ten by chiefs of Celtic lineage. In 800, the heptarchy (as the Saxon portion of the country may be termed) had virtually merged in a triarchy. Kent, Essex, and East Anglia, were all swallowed up in Mercia; Northumbria had risen out of the ruins of Deira and Bernicia; while Wessex had annexed to itself Sussex with all its dependencies. It was in this juncture that Egbert, a lineal descendant of the great Cerdic, returned from an honourable exile at the court of Charlemagne to mount the throne of Wessex. Trained in the school of the greatest warrior and monarch of his day, Egbert soon began to aspire at more extensive dominion; and was restrained from assailing the independence of his neighbours, only by the respect in which he held the talents of Kenwulf, king of Mercia. He contented himself, therefore, for a time, with pushing successful expeditions against the Britons of Devonshire and

- 1063 Sweyn conquers England
 1014 Flight of Ethelred. Sweyn dies
 1016 Edmund Ironside. Battle of Assington.

Cornwall; and governed, both with vigour and equity, the subjects committed to his care.

Egbert had swayed the sceptre of Wessex about nineteen years, when Kenwulf, king of Mercia, died; leaving an infant son heir to the crown, under the tutelage of his marriageable daughters. The eldest of these, an ambitious princess, caused her brother to be secretly put to death, with the design of securing to herself the permanent possession of the throne. But the foul deed, instead of answering the expectations of the perpetrator, served only to bring upon Mercia the calamities of a civil war; at the close of which, the kingdom stood exposed, in its weakness, to the machinations of a powerful neighbour. Beornulf, who, after a fierce struggle, had ascended the throne, committed, however, the gross error of wantonly provoking the hostility of Egbert. The armies met at Wilton, when a fierce battle took place, which ended in the total rout of Beornulf; and led, in a short time, to the dismemberment of Kent and Essex from Mercia, and their annexation to the kingdom of Wessex. Nor did Egbert cease, from that time forth, to carry forward, with steady perseverance, his schemes of universal dominion. He fomented a quarrel, which soon broke out between Mercia and East Anglia; and holding himself aloof till the strength of the former state was broken, he then invaded it in force, and reduced it to subjection. East Anglia was next attacked with similar good fortune; after which, he turned his victorious arms against Northumbria. But the king of that country, conscious of his inability to resist the storm, made haste, by a proffered submission, to avert it; upon which Egbert marched against the Britons of Denbighshire and Anglesea, and subdued them. Thus, at the close of three centuries of disquiet, the whole of England, properly so called, together with portions of Wales, and the low country of Scotland, became obedient to

one sovereign; under whom the lesser kings, as they continued still to be termed, acted the part of deputies, or rulers of provinces.

Egbert had not long enjoyed the reward of his combined courage and prudence, when a new enemy began to molest him; from whom, indeed, so early as 787, the people of Holy Island, in Northumbria, had suffered invasion. The enemy in question came from the most northerly shores of Europe; and, except that they far surpassed them in brutality, bore no trivial resemblance, in their general usages and habits, to the Saxon conquerors of England. Of the circumstances which impelled them to a life of wandering and plunder, a few words will suffice to convey a sufficiently accurate idea.

The countries, now recognised as Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, were, in early times, divided into numerous principalities, termed Fylki; each of which is described, by an Icelandic chronicler, as capable of equipping for sea twelve ships, and manning them respectively with sixty or seventy warriors. The governments of these Fylki were universally regal; but the peculiar institution which distinguished them from other societies, was a strange law of succession, which, cutting off from the younger sons all share in their father's patrimony, compelled them to seek for subsistence in a life of piracy. As soon as the royal youths attained to a fitting age, they were supplied, by their fathers or brothers, with arms and ships; and, assembling what followers they could, went forth to seek adventures, and to collect booty from every point to which the winds and waves might carry them.

Than these pirates by profession, who took to themselves the appellation of Vinkings, or Sea-kings, Europe has never produced a race of men more stained with the crimes of treachery and cruelty. Not content, like the generality of savage warriors, to slay, without remorse,

all by whom they were opposed in battle, the Sea-kings appeared to delight in the infliction of unnecessary torture; razing to the ground every town of which they obtained possession, and slaughtering men, women, and children, indiscriminately upon its ashes. For awhile, indeed, their operations extended not beyond the shores of the Baltic; but toward the middle of the eighth century, the peninsula of Jutland was invaded, and a large portion of Europe, including especially England and the coasts of France, became, from that time forth, the scene of their destructive inroads. I have spoken of a landing effected by them, in Holy Island, so early as 787. In 794, the province of Ulster, in Ireland, suffered a similar visitation, as did Northumberland in the year following; after which they returned periodically, and, on each occasion, with increased numbers. Nevertheless, so long as Egbert survived, their successes were both trifling in amount, and purchased at a dear rate. On one occasion, he encountered a large body of them at Charmouth, in Dorsetshire, and, after a sharp conflict, defeated them with great slaughter. A second victory, at Hingesdown, in Devon, proved still more decisive; while, in other counties which lay exposed to the insults of lesser bodies, a vigilant watch was maintained by the inhabitants, and the pirates were driven back. But in 836, Egbert died; and the sceptre of England passed into hands which were altogether incapable of wielding it.

The successor of Egbert was Ethelwulf, a man educated in the retirement of a monastery, and endowed, by nature, with few of those talents which the exigences of the times required. He made but feeble head against the Northmen, whose marked successes in France induced them to push, with increased vigour, their operations against England; while his domestic policy proved so imbecile, that his son Ethelbald was enabled to wrest from him the independent sovereignty of the

western counties. Neither his reign, therefore, nor that of Ethelbald, to whom he bequeathed, at his demise, the provinces already surrendered, present us with any events of which it is necessary to speak at large: they were alike stormy, as was that of Ethelbert, by whom, at his brother's death, the eastern and western counties were reunited; and who, for the space of six years, swayed the sceptre over a great nation, torn by intestine divisions, and exposed to constant attacks from abroad. The consequence was, that when, in 866, Ethelred, the third of Ethelwulf's sons, mounted the throne, he found that the Anglo-Saxon monarchy existed only in name. It was, in reality, broken up into four principalities, which exhibited, one towards another, the most implacable hatred; and which not even the terrors of a Danish invasion could induce, under any circumstances, or at any moment, to act in unison.

Such was the condition of England, when there arrived, on the coast of East Anglia, by far the most formidable armament that had as yet issued from the north. Twenty thousand Danes, under two distinguished leaders, made good their landing, and having fortified a camp, spent the winter in collecting horses, and gaining over partisans from the more unquiet of the Northumbrians. This done, they marched with the early spring against York, of which they made themselves masters, after defeating Ella, king of Northumbria, and putting him to death by the most exquisite torture. They then spread themselves over the face of the country, reduced it all from the Humber to the Tyne, and pushing a strong force as far as Nottingham, took possession of the place. Here Ethelred, attended by his brother Alfred, met them, his support having been earnestly solicited by Burrhed, king of Mercia; and after sustaining a siege they were compelled to evacuate the town, and fall back upon York. Each

successive month, however, brought over to them fresh supplies, which more than made good the losses which they sustained in battle, and enabled them, in a short time, to cross the Humber, and to lay waste a large portion of Lincolnshire. From Lincolnshire they marched into East Anglia, which they so entirely subdued, as to establish one of their own chiefs, by name Guthrum, upon the throne. They next invaded Wessex; carried the town of Reading by surprise, and endeavoured to establish there a permanent place of arms. But Ethelred and Alfred hurrying to the spot, a great battle ensued, in which, after an obstinate resistance, the Danes were put to the rout. Still the dangers which menaced the hereditary throne of Ethelred, were far from removed. Within a fortnight the Northmen engaged him again at Basing, where he took ample revenge for the defeat of Reading; and in a third battle, fought soon afterwards at Merton, fully maintained the reputation of their arms. How the last of their actions terminated, whether in favour of the Saxons or the Danes, may admit of a question; but there is no doubt that Ethelred received in it a mortal wound, of which he died in a few days afterwards.

The fall of Ethelred transferred the sceptre of Wessex to the most illustrious of all the monarchs that ever sat upon an Anglo-Saxon throne. Alfred, surnamed the Great, was born at Wantage, in Berkshire, in the year 849, being the youngest of four sons, whom Osburga, the daughter of Oslac, an English noble, bore to king Ethelwulf. His extraordinary beauty, vivacity, and playfulness, endeared him, while yet a child, to both his parents; and induced the king to send him, in the sixth year of his age, to receive the benison of the pope at Rome. Whether his holiness was deceived as to the degree of propinquity in which the boy stood towards the throne, or that, even then, the sovereign pontiffs were ambitious of being esteemed the rightful

dispensers of crowns, does not exactly appear. But it is certain that young Alfred was then crowned as future king of England; and that on a later occasion, when his father made a pilgrimage to the capital of Christendom, he was especially selected to be his companion.

For some time previous to the birth of Alfred, the Anglo-Saxons had greatly degenerated from the literary reputation of their ancestors. The thanes, dividing their time between the occupations of war and the chase, despised the more tranquil pursuits of knowledge, and turned the attention of their children only to such exercises as promised both to harden their frames, and to excite their courage. The common people, not at any period placed within the reach of education, were as rude and as credulous as absolute ignorance could render them; while of the clergy themselves, by far the larger proportion were incapable of interpreting the services which they repeated by rote. Under these circumstances it is little to be wondered at that Alfred, though early committed to the care of Swithin, prior of Winchester, should have grown up almost to manhood ignorant of the art of reading. It was, indeed, to his stepmother, Judith, the daughter of Charles the Bald, king of France, that he stood indebted for his first acquaintance with letters,—at least the merit of directing his active mind to the attainment of so laudable an object is universally attributed to her, by all the ancient chroniclers. Alfred, it appears, took especial pleasure in history, and the recitation of short poems, by which the Anglo-Saxon minstrels commemorated the illustrious exploits of kings and warriors of other days. It chanced that, on a certain occasion, the Queen Judith read to him, and to his brothers, a tale which particularly interested them, and which was the more attractive in consequence of the illuminations with which it was ornamented. She saw the effect which she had produced, and offered the volume

to him among the youths who should first learn to read it. Alfred instantly put himself under the tuition of a master, and laboured incessantly till his object was attained. From that hour, he devoted no inconsiderable portion of an active life to the cultivation of literature, and not only became, in his own person, an excellent scholar, but produced, by his example, a thirst for learning, which soon spread throughout all classes of his subjects.

Such was the prince, who, in the twenty-second year of his age, found himself called upon, by the unanimous suffrages of the nobles and prelates, to preside over the destinies of England. He was not, in point of proximity of descent, heir to the crown; for Ethelbert left two sons to succeed him; but these being infants, were, under existing circumstances, set aside, and Alfred, with whose merits the whole nation was acquainted, received a summons to the throne. He could not refuse the proffered dignity, though we are assured that it was with him no object of ambition; and he exerted himself to sustain with credit the heavy charge thus thrust upon him. But even Alfred found it impossible to make head against the enemies which now beset him. After sustaining repeated actions, he was compelled to conclude a peace, which left the Danes in possession of the larger portion of England, and secured to himself only the territories of Wessex, so long as his barbarous neighbours might consider it expedient to adhere to their engagement.

It constitutes a remarkable trait in the history of the Anglo-Saxons, that in defiance of all the associations connected with the fortunes of their ancestors, not one among their princes had as yet attempted to prepare a fleet, with which the coasts might have been defended against the incursions of the Northmen. It remained for Alfred to lay the foundation of this truly national bulwark, the British Navy, by the equipment, in 875,

of a squadron, which obtained some success over certain piratical vessels in the channel. But, though worsted at sea, the Danes proved too powerful for him on shore, and reduced him to the necessity of purchasing their retreat from his dominions, by the payment of a sum of money. Never was expedient less politic, or productive of more unsatisfactory results. The barbarians accepted his money, and made a demonstration of removing, but returned a few nights afterwards in great force, and attacked his camp. Alfred was taken by surprise; his cavalry was cut to pieces, his infantry dispersed, and his people so thoroughly disheartened, that multitudes fled beyond the seas in search of an asylum,—indeed, by all was the contest looked upon as hopeless, except by Alfred himself. Even when reduced to the condition of a solitary fugitive, however, he never despaired; and his heroism, though sorely tried for a time, received in the end its just reward.

The immediate cause of so remarkable a reverse in Alfred's fortunes was this. Hitherto the Danes, whether acting from the sea-board or in the interior, had abstained from military operations throughout the winter; and the Anglo-Saxons, lulled into a mistaken idea of security, were at such seasons thrown completely off their guard. Guthrum, the Danish sovereign of East Anglia, observed this negligence on Alfred's part, and determined to take advantage of it. On the first of January, 878, he assembled his force, under cloud of night, and pushing rapidly forward, entered Chippenham, on the left bank of the Avon, soon after darkness set in, on the evening of the sixth. It was a royal villa, and there is good reason to believe that Alfred himself was sojourning there; at least we know that he was near enough to be surrounded by one of the parties, which Guthrum immediately sent out for the purpose of scouring the country.

Had he obeyed the dictates of his own gallantry, the king would have fought his way through, or perished; but the entreaties of a few faithful friends prevailed over the impulses of a lofty spirit, and he consented to reserve himself for better times. He dismissed his followers, put on the disguise of a peasant, and escaped into the fastnesses of Somersetshire; where, after a variety of romantic adventures, he became the inmate of a swineherd's cottage. There he cheerfully submitted to perform the most menial offices, and bore with patience the rebukes of the swineherd's wife; finding consolation under all his trials in the reflection that he had done his duty, and looking forward, not without confidence, for brighter days to come.

In the mean while the Danes overran the counties of Hants, Dorset, Wilts, and Buckingham, and compelled the people, now deprived of a leader, to accept the yoke. The men of Somerset alone maintained their independence, and becoming by some means acquainted with the king's retreat, gradually drew towards it in formidable numbers. It was an island situated in the centre of a morass, at a point where the Thone and the Parret joined their waters; which, being surrounded by a deep forest, presented an admirable point of assembly to all who preferred freedom to slavery. Alfred soon began to regard himself as once more the chief of a band of devoted warriors. He caused the island to be fortified, and threw a bridge of communication across the marsh, by means of which ingress and egress might the more readily be obtained; and issuing forth, from time to time, attacked and overpowered such bodies of the enemy as he found unprepared to receive him. It was at this juncture that a fresh army of Danes, after ravaging the coasts of South Wales, sustained, before Kynwith Castle, in Devon, a severe defeat; in which their leader was slain, with twelve hundred of his warriors, and the sacred standard or raven-flag

taken. The spirits of Alfred and his chiefs rose high at the intelligence. They quitted their place of concealment; and having appointed a time and place at which to reassemble, dispersed over the face of the country, for the purpose of collecting their adherents.

While his friends were thus active in gathering together an army, Alfred, who possessed great skill in music, disguised himself as a wandering minstrel, and proceeded to the Danish camp. He found it pitched in the vicinity of Westbury, and boldly entering, was conducted without scruple to the royal tent. There, while he affected to amuse the barbarians, he made accurate notes of all that he beheld, and departed for the spot where his friends had appointed to meet him, with a thorough knowledge of the position of his enemies. The result may be anticipated. Having drawn his forces to a head, he marched rapidly against the Danes, whom he took altogether by surprise; and, overthrowing them with prodigious slaughter, chased them to an intrenchment, which they had constructed hard by. This he invested on every side, and pressed the siege so closely, that Guthrum was compelled to capitulate. His life was spared, as well as the lives of his chiefs; and on their consenting to receive the sign of baptism, and giving assurances of peaceable behaviour, the sovereignty of East Anglia, at which it might have been highly imprudent to grasp, was formally confirmed to them.

The tide of fortune was now turned; and though it met in after-times with an occasional check, it continued, to the close of his life, to flow in Alfred's favour. The Danes of Northumbria, acquiring a taste for settled pursuits, and overawed by the issue of Guthrum's attempts, made tenders of amity, which he did not esteem it prudent to reject. He left them in peaceable possession of the dominions which they had won, and limited his own authority for a time, by the

lations of Philosophy, by Boethius; and of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*. Then again, as a legislator, his fame stands deservedly at the highest; whether we regard him as the author of many excellent new laws, or as having digested and restored those of his predecessors. That he distributed the kingdom into counties and hundreds, instituted juries, and devised the custom of frankpledge, we have no reason to believe; but his merits as a civil ruler must have been great indeed, to induce a general persuasion, in almost all ages, that he did so.

The great Alfred died on the 26th of October, A.D. 901, in the fifty-third year of his age, and thirtieth of his reign; and was succeeded in the government by his son, Edward the Elder.

The reign of this prince, and of his natural son Athelstan, the stain upon whose birth threw no obstacle in the way of his succession, were chiefly memorable for the measures which both adopted, to consolidate the monarchy of which Alfred was the founder. Alfred had been content to treat his neighbours of East Anglia and Northumbria as vassal, or dependent sovereigns; Edward began, and Athelstan completed, their reduction to the state of mere subjects. This was not, however, the work of a day, nor accomplished till after much bloodshed; for the Anglo-Danes found ready supporters in the Scots, the Irish, and their countrymen of the north. Nevertheless, the fortune of Athelstan prevailed. In a great battle, fought at Brunanburgh, Anlaf, the representative of the Northumbrian kings, sustained a signal defeat, and the whole of England, from the Thames to the Forth, became united under the sceptre of the conqueror. In consequence of these memorable exploits, Athelstan has received from historians the title sometimes of first king of England, sometimes of first king of Britain. To the former of these appellations he seems to possess

a just claim; the latter cannot, with any propriety, be applied to a monarch whom the Welsh and Scottish tribes were never compelled to obey.

Athelstan was held in high estimation by his foreign contemporaries; of whom two, Otho, the emperor of Germany, and Lewis, prince of Aquitain, solicited and obtained the hands of his sisters in marriage. In like manner Harold, the founder of the Norwegian monarchy, entertained for him so much respect, that he placed at his court, for purposes of education, Haco, the heir of his throne. With Rollo, likewise, the most illustrious of all the rovers whom the northern seas sent forth, he contracted, after the conquest of Normandy, a close alliance; while to Alan, the exiled sovereign of Britany, he lent such aid as enabled him to recover the crown of his ancestors. But neither his virtues nor his fame could avert from Athelstan the stroke which falls alike upon king and peasant; he died in the year 940, deeply and sincerely regretted.

The sceptre now passed to Edmund, surnamed the Elder, the brother of Athelstan, and a prince by no means destitute of merit. He was unfortunate at the commencement of his reign; for Anlaf, the rival of his predecessor, being invited over by the restless Northumbrians, raised against him the standard of revolt, and set his power at defiance. A civil war ensued, which ended in a partition of the kingdom; all the country to the north of Watling-street being assigned to the Dane: but a year had scarcely passed over when Anlaf died, and Northumbria became again obedient to the Anglo-Saxon monarch. From that period to the day of his death, Edmund continued to assert his superiority over the whole of England. He exerted himself, likewise, to preserve order in the land, and exercised great severity upon such freebooters and robber-chiefs as came into his power,—a commendable duty; to his zeal in discharging which this monarch

fell a victim. He was assassinated at Pucklekirk, in Gloucestershire, while celebrating the feast of St. Augustine, by a noted outlaw named Leolf.

The royal authority was now intrusted, by the great council of the nobles, to Edred, the brother of Edmund, in consequence of the extreme youth of his sons, Edwy and Edgar. His reign, which lasted only ten years, was by no means tranquil; for the Northumbrians again rebelled, and Eric, the brother of Haco, king of Norway, put himself at their head. Edred marched against the insurgents. He laid waste their lands with merciless severity; and discord happily arising among themselves, their subjugation was at length accomplished. That, however, which tended most to confer celebrity on his reign was the degree of influence which, under him, the ecclesiastics began to exercise, and the struggle for superiority which was then carried on between the regular and secular clergy. It will be necessary to explain, in few words, both the origin of these disputes, and the consequences to which they led.

There is no reason to doubt that, from a very early period after the first promulgation of Christianity, religious houses, or monasteries, were established in England. Under the Anglo-Saxon princes, these establishments had greatly multiplied, in consequence of the liberality with which kings and nobles conferred lands upon the clergy; a body of rude warriors being easily persuaded to believe that they could adopt no more certain method of atoning for their own sins, or appeasing the wrath of Heaven. As yet, however, the inhabitants of these houses had not been subject to any very rigid discipline. They took no vows of celibacy, or of implicit obedience to their superiors, but lived, whether married or single, very much after the manner of canons in our cathedrals; that is to say, they mixed in some degree with the world, and

endeavoured to render themselves useful to it. In one word, they belonged to the order of secular clergy, who, besides officiating in the churches to which they were sent, devoted a considerable portion of their time to the education of youth.

Matters were in this state, when Otho, the son of a Danish rover, and himself trained to the use of arms in his youth, attained to the dignity of archbishop of Canterbury. At the commencement of his clerical career, this man had been the pupil of Berno, the superior of a Benedictine convent, at Clugny, a species of monastery which was then rare throughout Europe, though it had, for some time previously, received the commendation of the Pope. The discipline exercised in this, and in other houses of the same kind, was exceedingly strict. The monks were bound by oath to practise much self-denial; to place both their minds and bodies at the command of their superior; to study taciturnity; to renounce all intercourse with the world; and, above all, to live lives of the strictest celibacy. It is not difficult to discover a reason why societies, framed on such a model, should obtain a large share of pontifical favour. The monks, cut off from every tie of domestic life, became ready instruments in the hands of their chief, upon whom, again, the influence of the court of Rome could, with perfect facility, be brought to bear; till the whole order, from its base to its summit, became an organized and disciplined army, enrolled, as it were, for the express purpose of enlarging the bounds of papal authority. It was in this school, of which he became, in due time, the master, that Otho received his first instruction in theology; nor can it surprise us that his views then received a direction, from which he never afterwards sought to divert them. All the energies of his mind, indeed, became gradually devoted to the extension of the order to which he belonged; and, in

proportion as he attained to situations of increased authority and importance, his exertions in the sacred cause became the greater.

Established in the archiepiscopal chair of Canterbury, Otho, or Odo, early turned his attention towards the state of the church over which he was called upon to preside. In point both of morals and discipline, it was, perhaps, sufficiently defective; but the zealous prelate, instead of seeking to correct these, aimed at nothing less than a total revolution, by the eradication of what were called the secular clergy, and the establishment of monachism in their room. It does not, however, appear that he possessed either talent or self-command sufficient to carry him through so extensive an undertaking. For awhile, indeed, he seems to have abandoned the project in despair; till there came to his aid a coadjutor worthy of the cause, before whose energy and unscrupulous devotion all difficulties were made to give way. This was Dunstan, a man not less remarkable in his age, than any whom Europe has produced; but of whom modern historians have spoken either in praise or the reverse, rather according to the suggestion of their own prejudices, than agreeably to the dictates of historical truth. Of noble lineage, and connected, as was said, with the royal family itself, Dunstan received the rudiments of his education in the abbey of Glastonbury, where his progress was such, as to deserve the commendation of all to whose care he had been intrusted. Of every accomplishment known in those times he made himself master; but that in which he particularly excelled was music; an art which was then held in so much estimation, that it drew him to court, and obtained for him the countenance of king Athelstan. Dunstan, however, like other aspirants after royal favour, soon discovered that he had enemies; and their machinations prevailed to obtain his expulsion. He was glad to

escape from the palace with life, and to seek, in retirement, that safety which neither his learning nor his accomplishments could procure for him elsewhere.

Disgusted with the treatment which he had received at court, Dunstan turned his ideas into a new channel, and determined upon contracting a marriage with a woman to whom he was attached, and spending the rest of his days in retirement. He was opposed in this resolution by his uncle, Anselm, then archbishop of Canterbury, who urged him to adopt the cowl; and pressed the point so warmly, that the young enthusiast began to waver. A violent fever was the consequence of extreme uneasiness of mind, which left him a prey to superstition; during a paroxysm of which, he assumed the monastic habit and took the oath of celibacy. From that day forth he was an altered man. His ambition, which had but slumbered, took a different bent, and he became devoted to the advancement of his order; for the purpose of accomplishing which, he stood ready to sacrifice his own life, as freely as he was prepared to sport with the lives of others. How far he may have acted, even in such a case, under a mistaken sense of duty, we know not; but it is certain that he was not very scrupulous touching the means of which he made use in the pursuit of his object.

In a barbarous age, he who aims at a reputation for superior piety, must be content to commit many extravagances, and to suffer many privations: and no man was ever less fastidious in the use of these instruments of advancement than Dunstan. He caused a cave to be dug, which, measuring only five feet in length, was just lofty enough to permit his standing upright; and there, for the space of many months, he lived, holding, as he himself avowed, frequent contests with the devil, and mortifying the flesh by the severest penance. As a matter of course, his sanctity became

blazoned abroad over the face of the country. Persons of the highest rank flocked to see him; and, in the end, he was invited, by king Edmund, to repair to court. He eagerly obeyed the summons; and, though his object was somewhat different from what it had been on a previous occasion, the feelings of his youth revived, and he became again the intriguing and the ambitious courtier. His first preferment placed him at the head of the abbey of Glastonbury. He introduced into it the rules of the Benedictine order; and, being in high favour with the monarch, to whom, indeed, he acted as treasurer, caused the weight of royal authority to aid him in extending the system elsewhere. From Edred he received still stronger marks of favour; for that monarch would have advanced him to the see of Winchester, had not a loftier ambition induced him to decline it. As bishop of Winchester, his influence would be, by comparison, little felt,—and, in those days, there existed a prejudice against translations even to the see of Canterbury. Though, therefore, he refused the proffered dignity, he took care to make his master aware, that St. Peter appeared to him in the course of the night, and, after chastising him severely, laid upon him a positive command, that he should not refuse the primacy of England, which should, in due time, be offered to him.

Supported by such a coadjutor, Archbishop Odo, though in extreme old age, carried on with vigour his crusade against the seculars, denouncing the marriage of the clergy as a sin of the deepest die, and bestowing the highest encomiums on the purity and virtue of the Benedictines. So long as Edred survived, the cause of monachism promised to prevail; but that monarch died in the year 955, and was succeeded by his nephew Edwy, a prince possessed of a very different disposition. Edwy, swayed in part by his mother, Elgiva, in part

actuated by hostility to his uncle's memory, displayed at a very early period his hatred of the monachists; who were not, it must be confessed, very careful to conciliate his good opinion. He had married, or according to other authorities, was living on less creditable terms, with a beautiful woman, named Ethelgiva, with whom he was so enamoured, that on the festival of his coronation he suddenly quitted the nobles, in the midst of their carousals, and repaired to her apartment. The act gave great offence to all, but especially to Dunstan, who following the monarch, broke in upon his privacy, and dragged him back, in the most insulting manner, to the banquet-hall. It would have been strange had either Edwy or his bride forgiven this insult. Dunstan, whether justly or not, was convicted of embezzling the king's treasure, and being deprived of all his honours and wealth, was condemned to banishment.

Had Edwy stopped here, it is just possible that, great as the power of the church had already become, he might have triumphed. His hatred to Dunstan, however, extended to the whole Benedictine order; whom he proceeded forthwith to deprive of their possessions, and to restore them to their original owners, the secular clergy. This proceeding roused in a moment the fury of Archbishop Odo. The marriage between the king and Ethelgiva was pronounced null and void: Ethelgiva herself was seized, branded with hot irons, and transported to Ireland; while a conspiracy was entered into among the most powerful of the nobles, before which the king found it impracticable to stand. He would have instantly recalled Dunstan, but it was too late to allay the storm, at the head of which the king's brother was persuaded to place himself; and the remainder of the unhappy king's reign was occupied in a hopeless contest with an imperious clergy, and a rebellious nobility. As to Ethelgiva, after having

escaped from Ireland, when the marks of the branding were erased, she was seized at Gloucester by the rebels, who put her to death in the most barbarous manner, after cutting the sinews of her legs with their swords. How Edwy himself ended his days, authorities are not agreed; but whether a victim to assassination, or that grief and mortification carried him off, he died in 959, and left the throne to his brother Edgar.

Indebted to the monks for his ill-gotten dignity, and attached, perhaps conscientiously, to the views which they entertained, this prince threw himself into the hands of Dunstan, whom he advanced, in succession, to the sees of Worcester, London, and Canterbury, and armed with full power to carry forward his reform of ecclesiastical discipline. The secular clergy were now every where displaced, and monasteries, after a new model, erected in great numbers. In other respects, Edgar's reign was marked by few events, of which the compass of this history will permit us to take notice. England obeyed him, from the Severn to the Tweed, and the kings of Scotland and Wales paid him homage,—in proof of which he caused eight of them to row his barge down the Dee, while he himself sat in the stern. But though prosperous in all his undertakings, his moral character appears to have been the reverse of amiable. He was licentious to so great a degree, that neither the sanctity of a convent, nor the marriage tie, debarred him from the accomplishment of his wishes. Nevertheless it is but fair to state that he paid great attention to the administration of justice, and suppressed, as far as in that age any monarch could do, crimes arising out of family feuds and private quarrels. Among other wise acts it is recorded of him that, after exterminating the beasts of prey, which formerly abounded amid the forests of England, he commuted the tribute, which the Welsh princes had

been accustomed to pay, for an annual present of three hundred wolves' heads.

Edgar, who was twice married, first to Elfreda, surnamed the Fair, and afterwards to Elfrida, the widow of a noble called Athelwold*, died after a reign of sixteen years, at the early age of thirty-two. He was succeeded, though not without some attempt at opposition, by Edward, his son by the former marriage; a youth of mild temper and gentle manners, over whom Dunstan exercised unlimited influence. His reign is little memorable, except for the increased acerbity with which religious contests were carried on; and the extraordinary hardihood displayed by the archbishop, in his appeals to Heaven against the reasoning of his antagonists. On one occasion, when a synod was assembled at Winchester, which threatened to prove less subservient than Dunstan had anticipated, a voice suddenly issued from a crucifix, which commended the zeal displayed in the expulsion of the seculars, and exhorted the primate to persevere. On another, the nobles having met in council, and their suffrages appearing to go against him, the prelate concluded a reply to certain reproaches, which they threw upon him, with these words: "I confess that I am unwilling to be overcome; I commit the cause of the church to the decision of Christ." He had scarcely ended, when the floor of the apartment gave way, and all who had taken part in the discussion fell, with the ruins, to the earth. The seat of Dunstan alone remained unmoved;

* It is told of this noble that, having been employed by the king to ascertain how far the rumours of Elfrida's beauty were just, he imposed both upon his master and the lady, and marrying her himself, endeavoured to conceal his fraud by keeping her back from the royal court. Edgar, however, paid him a visit, saw and admired his wife, and, having slain the noble, took his widow to the bed which had been originally designed for her.

while of his enemies some were killed, others grievously bruised, and all, for a time, thoroughly disheartened. Still there was one individual in the kingdom, whom neither artifice nor threats could overcome. The dowager-queen Elfrida put herself at the head of the discontented nobles, and laboured assiduously to effect the downfall of Dunstan,—upon whom, however, she was soon taught to understand that during Edward's lifetime no impression could be made. The ambitious and unprincipled woman determined to remove this obstacle; and she attained her end by an act of unparalleled treachery. The king, having separated from his retinue during a hunting-match, arrived weary and faint at her castle-gate, and refusing to alight, requested only that she would afford him a little wine with which to slake his thirst. The cup was given, and while he yet drank, an assassin stabbed him in the back. He endeavoured to escape, but soon grew faint with loss of blood; when, falling to the ground, and his foot remaining entangled in the stirrup, he was dragged along by his horse till he died. In consequence of the great amiability of his manners, and of his early and tragical end, this prince received from the monkish chroniclers, with whom he was contemporary, the epithet of Martyr; and the title is still bestowed upon him by modern writers, to distinguish him from others of the same name who filled the English throne.

The successor of Edward was his half-brother Ethelred, called, by reason of his imbecility and indolence, the Unready. He came to the throne at the age of ten, and filled it for five-and-twenty years,—a period of time remarkable, even in those early and troubled ages, for the extent of calamity which overwhelmed England. During his reign we hear little of the disputes among the clergy, which seem to have been forgotten amid the horrors of continual warfare. The Northmen, who

for some generations had intermitted their piratical expeditions, began, soon after his accession, to infest the coasts; and their brethren of Northumbria and East Anglia, in spite of a long settlement in the island, readily joined them. Their first serious attack occurred in 991, when they took possession of Ipswich. Ethelred did not venture to oppose them with arms, but offered a high bribe for their removal; a measure which, while it convinced the pirates of the weakness of the English, held out the strongest inducements to renewed invasion; nor did that very natural consequence fail to follow. In 994 the enemy came again in greater force than ever, and were again bought off by a pecuniary donation. Similar events took place from year to year, only that the fine became, on each occasion, more heavy; while every successive inroad had the effect of more and more confirming the malecontents in the designs which Ethelred's weakness induced them to form. But that which inflicted the most fatal blow on the king's decaying authority, was an act of atrocious cruelty of which he was guilty, and by the perpetration of which he vainly hoped to ensure tranquillity during the remainder of his days.

On the day before St. Brice's festival, in the year 1002, the magistrates of every town and city throughout Wessex received secret instructions to put to death, without mercy, all the Danes that might chance to reside within the limits of their several jurisdictions. The bloody order was obeyed to the letter; and multitudes of Danes, of all ages and both sexes, perished. Never did crime bring with it fewer advantages, or a more speedy and more tremendous punishment. Svein, king of Denmark, informed of the massacre, assembled all his forces, and landing at Exeter, marked his progress through the country, by the ruins of the houses which he consumed, and the bodies of the inhabitants whom he slew. He proceeded next to Norwich,

followers, and bewildered in a forest. After wandering about for awhile, and entangling himself more deeply at every step, a young swineherd met him, to whom he offered gold as the price of a safe-conduct beyond the wood, and an escort as far as the Danish camp. The swineherd answered him in language which satisfied the Dane that he was no ordinary peasant. He explained to him that any attempt to retrace his steps through the heart of so many straggling bodies of the enemy, could lead only to the destruction of both; and proposed to lodge him for the night where he would be safe. The Dane assented, and was conducted by his new acquaintance to a cottage, amid the recesses of the wilderness, where every thing, though humble and unpretending, had about it an air of great neatness. There he passed the night, and on the following day was led with perfect good faith to the tents of his friends; but no entreaties could prevail on the young swineherd to accept a pecuniary reward. He embraced, however, readily the promise of patronage, and entered, as a warrior, the service of Canute; by whom, at first on the recommendation of his patron, afterwards, as the reward of his own merits, he was raised from one station to another, till he attained to an earldom. The young swineherd was no other than Godwin, afterwards famous in English history; and the father of the last sovereign of Saxon lineage that sat upon the English throne.

While England continued in a state of division, Canute employed himself in repelling an inroad of Norwegians, who took advantage of his absence beyond the seas to invade his paternal dominions. In this he was greatly assisted by Godwin, as well as in the reduction of Sweden, which occurred a few years later; but the death of Edmund, which befell in 1016, rendering him sole master of England, he established there the chief seat of his power. He governed it,

not perhaps mildly, but with great vigour, and used his best exertions to blot out all distinction between Dane and Anglo-Saxon; though the severity with which he persecuted the children of the ancient line showed that he entertained of them more than a natural jealousy. Edwy, the brother of Edmund, he put to death, and sent his two sons as state-prisoners into Sweden,—not without a suspicion of having directed his representative there to rid him for ever of all grounds of uneasiness on their account. But if his designs extended to the extermination of the family, they failed of accomplishment. One indeed, Edmund, died in captivity; but the other passed into Germany, where he married Agatha, the emperor's daughter, and became the father of a son called Edgar Atheling.

I have said that Canute exercised great severity in the government of England; it is due to his memory to add, that the many disorders which a long dissolution of government had brought upon the land, rendered these proceedings necessary. Of his love for justice, and contempt of flattery on the other hand, two anecdotes may be given. Having, in a moment of intemperance, killed an innocent man, and thereby violated a law which he had himself enacted, he arrayed himself in the garb of a delinquent, and caused his judges to sit in judgment upon him, with the same formality which they would have exercised in the trial of a less-elevated criminal. The *were*, or mulct for homicide, was then fixed at forty talents of silver, and the king became, of course, liable in that sum. He voluntarily increased it to three hundred and sixty, and added nine talents of gold, which were given to the relatives of the deceased. Again, it is told of him that, disgusted with the adulation of his courtiers, he carried them to the sea-side, and commanded them to place a seat within the line of high-tide mark, on which he sat down. "You have

frequently assured me," said he to his attendants, "that my authority knew no bounds: doubtless you speak the truth, and, therefore, I forbid the sea to advance beyond its present limits, or to wet the robe of me its master." The sea held its course, till the monarch's feet were wet, and after affected anger, he was compelled to withdraw. He then turned to his nobles, and upbraiding them with their folly, desired that they would reserve, in future, such adulation as they had bestowed upon him, for the Being who alone had power to assign to the ocean its bounds.

At the death of Canute there appeared two candidates for the throne; Harold, his eldest son, by a Danish mother, and Hardicanute, whom Emma, the widow of Ethelred, had borne to him. The feelings of the English led them to prefer the latter, to whom it had been the design of Canute to bequeath the throne of Denmark; but, besides that Harold was on the spot, and Hardicanute at a distance, the former found means to engage in his favour Earl Godwin, now one of the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon nobility. He accordingly mounted the throne; and when the bishops, with one accord, refused to crown him, abjured Christianity, and governed without receiving the holy unction. Harold's career was brief, and distinguished chiefly by his personal immoralities, and the bitterness with which he persecuted the descendants of king Ethelred. One of these, named Alfred, he enticed into his power, and put to death with great cruelty; the other happily saw through his artifices, and continued to reside in Normandy. But the means of oppressing his people, and violating their prejudices, were not long afforded to Harold, who died in 1040, unlamented by the men of either nation. Hardicanute now succeeded, and though hostile to the memory of his predecessor, treated his half-brother, Edward, with great kindness. He invited him over to England, had him constantly

about his person, and displayed unbounded confidence in his fidelity and honour,—a mode of proceeding which, while it gratified the English, rendered his own throne, while he filled it, doubly secure. That, however, was not long, for, in 1042, he died of an excess committed at a nuptial feast in Lambeth; upon which Edward, to the unspeakable joy of his Anglo-Saxon countrymen, took possession of the vacant dignity.

827 Since the dissolution of what has been termed the Heptarchy, a weaker or a more amiable prince than Edward never swayed the sceptre of England. His mistaken views of religious duty carried him so far, that he treated with neglect the daughter of Earl Godwin, to whom he was united in marriage; while his personal predilections were indulged to a mischievous degree, in the promotion of Normans to every office of trust, both in church and state. This was a sorry return to his native-born subjects for the enthusiasm with which they had hailed the restoration of his father's line; and it led, ere long, to commotions and seditions, which had well-nigh ended in his ruin. Earl Godwin, in particular, bore with impatience the preference which was, on all occasions, given to foreigners, and seized the first convenient opportunity of convincing the king that the proceeding was neither politic nor safe. It chanced that the duke of Boulogne, in his passage from Normandy to London, found it necessary to rest for a day in Dover; where a quarrel arose between certain of his suite and the townspeople, which ended in an exchange of blows. The duke, with extreme imprudence, espoused the cause of his retinue, and riding forth, in full armour, at the head of his guards, committed among the naked citizens considerable slaughter. Such an occasion was all of which Earl Godwin stood in need. He raised, without delay, an outcry, that the people of England were trodden underfoot by foreigners, and invited all true patriots to

unite with him in putting an end to so mischievous a system. He was not slow in assembling an army, with which, had he acted vigorously, and as the circumstances of the case pointed out, he might have held the king at his mercy, and dictated his own terms. It appeared, however, either that Godwin's scruples clouded his judgment, or that his followers were averse to carry matters to an extremity; for he procrastinated so long, that Edward found time to rally round him the forces of the earls of Mercia and Northumberland, with which he instantly took the field. Godwin now moderated his tone, and required only that the foreigners should be expelled the kingdom; but even to this the king refused his consent; and after the armies had faced one another some days, it was agreed, at the suggestion of the insurgents, that the matter in dispute should be referred to the decision of the Wittenagemot. The voice of that assembly pronounced Earl Godwin a traitor; and included his three sons, Harold, Svein, and Tostig, in the sentence; upon which they fled, two to Flanders, and two to Ireland, while the queen was, with unnecessary rigour, shut up in a convent.

It was at this period, when there existed no influence at hand to thwart him, and the absence of a legitimate heir called his ambition into play, that William, duke of Normandy, as if to keep alive the intimacy of former days, paid a friendly visit to the court of London. Whether he succeeded in obtaining from Edward a promise of the succession, we have no ground on which to determine; but it is very probable that his wishes pointed in that direction, and that he used his best exertions to secure their accomplishment. But however that might be, it is certain that the effect of his treatment was such as to give to the visions which had previously flitted before his eyes a distinct shape; and he ceased not ever after to regard the English crown as an object within the reach of his attainment.

In the meanwhile Godwin and his sons were assembling a band of adventurers, with which, in 1052, they invaded England. There was no energy whatever in the king's counsels, so the rebels marched upon London, got the king into their power, and compelled him to submit to terms of their own dictation. These included not only the restoration of the exiles to all their former honours, but the expulsion of the Normans from the realm; a proceeding which enabled them to thrust into the highest offices their own creatures and adherents. Earl Godwin himself, indeed, did not long enjoy the influence with which these proceedings invested him. He died in 1053, but his son Harold, a man of considerable talent, and singularly popular manners, failed not to turn it to the best account. He not only acquired a moral ascendancy over the mind of the king, but rendered himself universally acceptable to the nation,—not more by reason of his liberality and courteous deportment, than from his activity in suppressing revolts, and chastising the hostile incursions of the Welsh. Yet, with all his popularity, Harold found it impracticable to transfer to his brother, Tostig, the earldom of Northumbria, which had become vacant by the death of Seward; inasmuch as the Northumbrians refused to pay obedience to any other than the grandson of the man who had ruled them many years with striking fidelity. He was, therefore, compelled to treat Tostig as a traitor, by disavowing the attempts made by him to secure the dignity by force; and Tostig became in consequence an exile beyond seas, and, as the event proved, Harold's most implacable and dangerous enemy.

If we except the remission of a tax called *Danegelt*, to which the men of Danish extraction had heretofore been subject, and a successful interference in the affairs of Scotland, by which the murder of Duncan was avenged, and Macbeth the usurper dethroned,

there occurred no other event during the reign of Edward the Confessor, of which it is necessary to give an account. The death of Edward, however, which took place on the eve of the Epiphany in 1066, led to consequences of the greatest importance, and, for a time at least, the most calamitous. Having no child of his own, it was his intention to bequeath the sovereignty to Edward, the son of Edmund Ironside, whom he recalled from Hungary; but that prince fell a victim to disease in the year 1057, and Edgar Atheling alone, of the lineage of the great Cerdic, survived. Edgar Atheling, however, was not only unknown to the English, but at too great a distance to be made acquainted immediately with the state of affairs. It was, therefore, strictly true, that on the demise of Edward, the throne of England became vacant; and according to the ancient constitution of the country, it rested with the Wittenagemot, or great council, to supply the vacancy. Nevertheless, Harold, whose hopes had long pointed to the prize which was now within his grasp, did not esteem it prudent to wait for this solemn recognition. He knew that William of Normandy stood ready to claim the crown, and he was not unaware either of the grounds on which such claims would be advanced, or of the force with which it might be supported. He therefore caused himself to be proclaimed king on the evening of the day on which Edward died; and deferred till a more convenient opportunity the ceremony of approval by the Wittenagemot.

Harold, as I took occasion to observe a short time ago, was exceedingly popular, and his accession was hailed by the people at large as a fortunate event. Neither did the Wittenagemot, which he almost immediately called together, refuse to sanction the proceeding. He was crowned with all due solemnity, and in the usual place, and he governed, for a brief space, with vigour and equity. But Harold had, either voluntarily

or by compulsion, placed himself, some years previously, in a situation which, in an age so superstitious as that of which we are now treating, told fearfully against him. Having, by some means or another, fallen into the hands of William of Normandy, that prince, who suspected his designs, caused him to swear upon an altar, under which were concealed the relics of more than one saint, that he would never oppose himself to his (William's) just pretensions, or aspire to the sovereignty of England. According to William's account, the vow in question was pronounced freely; according to Harold's statement, it was altogether compulsory; but wherever the truth might rest, William now hastened to take advantage of the circumstance, and to proclaim his rival perjured and mansworn before the rest of Europe. As, however, Harold paid no attention to the protest, and sent back, with little ceremony, the messengers who required him to abdicate, William made ready for the appeal to arms, and soon found himself at the head of a formidable army, in which adventurers from all the countries of Christendom sought eagerly to enrol themselves. Finally, the pope, to whom he appealed, not only gave sentence in his favour, but presented him with a consecrated banner; a conspicuous proof that his cause was just, and a certain sign that it would triumph.

Warned of the storm which was gathering, and far too prudent to undervalue it, Harold threw himself on the affections of his people, who flocked to his standard in great numbers, and exhibited every disposition to defend him to the last. Had he been required, under such circumstances, to guard only against the designs of William, we have good ground to believe that he would have defeated them; but, unfortunately, his brother Tostig was also in array against him; and at this critical juncture landed in Northumbria, where he obtained some advantages. Harold could not

leave an active enemy in his rear, while he watched the movements of a force as yet at a distance; and he accordingly marched, with all haste, into the disturbed districts, where he engaged and defeated his brother. But this movement, though perhaps unavoidable, and executed with the utmost skill, proved ruinous in its ultimate result. Harold was at dinner in the city of York, on the day succeeding his victory, when information reached him that the Normans had made good their landing. He instantly broke up his camp, and hurried, by forced marches, to place both fortune and life on the issue of a single battle.

When he found himself compelled to carry his army to the north, Harold had not been careless in providing, as far as his means would allow, for the defence of the southern counties. He equipped a numerous and formidable fleet, which he directed to cruise in the channel, and which, for a time, obeyed his orders with punctuality, and perfect success. But provisions falling short, the admirals dispersed for the purpose of revictualling; an operation which was not then, as it is now, the business of a day. At this critical period, William, whom a succession of adverse winds had long baffled, was enabled to carry his troops on board of ship, and to transport them, without the occurrence of any serious accident, to the shores of Sussex. There, not far from the spot on which the ruins of Pevensey Castle still stand, he disembarked about thirty thousand men,—the flower of all the warriors of Europe, whether archers, spearmen, or men at arms; and marching rapidly to Hastings, pitched his camp in a convenient position, while the stores and provisions, necessary for future operations, were landed.

William had not long occupied his camp, when the approach of Harold was communicated to him; he sent, in the spirit of the times, a formal challenge, that

his rival would meet him in single combat, and leave to the issue of the duel the decision of their claims. Harold declined the personal combat, and after manning a squadron of seven hundred ships, which he directed to cut off the retreat of the invaders, pushed forward at the head of an army considerably weakened by this ill-judged draught, and exhausted by the fatigue which it had already undergone. On the thirteenth of October, 1066, the hostile armies came in sight of one another, and passed the night in their respective camps; the Saxons, as it is said, amid carousing and laughter, the Normans in solemn prayer to God. Be this, however, as it may, both were formed, and ready for battle, as soon as daylight came in on the following morning. It was a fierce and furious contest,—in which all the courage and skill which either party possessed were brought to bear, and for some hours the event remained doubtful. At one time, indeed, fortune appeared to declare against the Normans, who, unable to make any impression upon the solid masses of the Saxon infantry, began to slacken in their exertions, and to lose ground. They were instantly rallied by William, and again led forward; but neither the devotion of his archers, nor the fiery courage of his knights, availed anything against the stubborn valour of the Saxon bill-men. At this juncture, William directed a thousand chosen horse to make a feint of charging, and by a pretended retreat to draw, if possible, the enemy from their solid array. The stratagem succeeded; for the Saxons, believing that the last reserve had failed, raised a wild shout, and dispersed in pursuit. In a moment they were enveloped by a band of men-at-arms, who, penetrating their files, cut them down by hundreds, and drove the remainder back in confusion to the high grounds. Still the fugitives rallied in detached circles, and fought

on till night closed around them, when it was discovered that their king had fallen, by a chance arrow in the brain, and that his gallant brothers were also numbered with the dead. Then, indeed, the Saxons broke and fled, and their monarchy, which had subsisted in England for more than six centuries, came to an end.

CHAPTER IV.

MANNERS, CUSTOMS, INSTITUTIONS, AND LAWS, OF THE
ANGLO-SAXONS

[A. D. 600 to A. D. 900.]

BEFORE I proceed further with the narrative which I have undertaken to draw up, it may not be amiss if I endeavour to convey to the minds of my readers some general notion of the manners, the customs, and legal institutions, which prevailed in the land of their forefathers, during the vigour of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy. Of the state of utter barbarism into which the Saxons were sunk, when under their piratical leaders they first invaded Britain, sufficient notice has already been taken. To that I am not going to advert further than by stating, that in proportion as they mixed more and more freely with the tribes whom they had reduced, and who for the space of three centuries had enjoyed the benefits of Roman intercourse, the barbarians lost some portion of their ferocity. How, or in what order, the work of civilization was carried on, it is not worth while to inquire. Doubtless, the first step in this, as in other instances, was marked by the abandonment of a wandering and predatory life, and the devotion of men's time and energies to the cultivation of the soil. But that which more than any other cause produced an effect upon their manners, was, without all question, the introduction of Christianity, before whose softening influence, clouded as it was with errors and superstitious observances, the rude warriors of the north became comparatively mild and humane.

The sketch, therefore, which I am going to give, may be taken as illustrative of the condition of England, after the religion of the Gospel had become

established, and the petty principalities into which the country had anciently been divided, were either united under one head, or were on the eve of becoming so.

Beginning with the first arrangements of their social existence, we discover that there prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons a custom of intrusting their children to the care of female nurses; and that these nurses or foster-mothers were ever afterwards held in high esteem by the persons of whose infancy they had taken charge. In very early times, indeed, the practice of exposing their infants was not less usual among them, than among the other northern nations; but it appears to have rapidly died out, so soon as the light of Christianity made its way into our island, and the monarchs began to enact laws in prohibition of it. The period of baptism, as fixed by custom, was the thirtieth day after the birth. The child was then immersed in the presence of its sponsors, and a name given to it, always expressive either of a quality in the infant itself, or of the caprice or vanity of its parents. Thus, the word Egbert signifies, in English, "bright eye;" Ethelwolf, "the noble wolf;" Ethelheard, "the noble protector." Whether the Anglo-Saxons made use of surnames in the sense applied to the term by us, is doubtful. We find, indeed, one man called Wulfsic se Blaca, that is, "the pale;" another Thurceles Hwitan, that is, "the white;" and a third from the name of his residence, Elfric, "at Bertune;" but these additions were probably given rather to distinguish individuals than families, though they doubtless came at last to be regarded as patronymics.

The life of an Anglo-Saxon man was divided into three periods, childhood, an intermediate state, and manhood. The first ended at eight years of age, when the urchin ceased to remain under the guidance of his mother; the second began at eight, and ended at fifteen, when he was denominated a Cnight; and the

last, it is scarcely necessary to add, endured throughout the remainder of his days. As to the females, they became mistresses of their own persons and fortunes at the early age of thirteen.

Education, meaning by that phrase instruction in science and in letters, was never generally cultivated by the Anglo-Saxons. Persons designed for the clerical profession were indeed taught to read; and at one period, when a number of Irish scholars happened to be spread over the country, their acquaintance with the learned languages, as well as their own, was far from contemptible. But the training of the young thane was confined to the use of arms, the mode of managing a restive horse, and the following or insnaring of animals of the chase. In addition to these accomplishments, the Anglo-Saxon youth was taught habits of obedience, by constant attendance on his father and his guests; indeed, the epithet bestowed upon him implies that a docile temper was expected, the word Cnight signifying rather a servant than a young man.

The domestic economy of the Anglo-Saxons was, as may be imagined, exceedingly simple. Their bread was composed of wheat or barley; their animal food consisted principally of swine's-flesh, and their fish of eels, though they caught and ate other species as often as they came in their way. They cultivated orchards, in which were raised figs, grapes, almonds, pears, and apples. Honey was in great esteem among them, as well as eggs, cheese, and milk, and they consumed a great deal of salt. Their cookery, again, extended no further than baking, boiling, and roasting, and their drinks were water, mead, ale, and wine. We have the best evidence, that at meal-times, men and women sat down together, and had the table covered with a clean linen cloth. Several ancient illuminations remain, which represent a Saxon family at dinner, and the

style in all of these is pretty much alike. A party, composed of persons of both sexes, is depicted as surrounding a board, each with a knife, a wooden dish, and horn before him; while two servants are in the act of handing about a fish, with some kind of roasted food attached to a spit. In the middle of the table are a few loaves, and a pile of roasted apples.

The Anglo-Saxons of both sexes bestowed a great deal of attention upon their dress. That of the men in the higher ranks consisted of tunics and cloaks, composed of linen, cotton, or silk. The lower orders wore a sort of frock or jacket, not dissimilar to the smock-frock of the present day. Leather shoes were in use among them, as were sandals; in the room of stockings, they entwined bandages round their legs, and their breeches barely touched the knee. The taste of the women, again, was displayed chiefly in the curling of their hair, and in the jewels and golden ornaments with which they adorned their persons. For the symmetry of their forms they appear to have had very little regard.

While the churches, and other sacred edifices, were constructed among the Anglo-Saxons with elaborate care, the dwellings, even of their princes, appear to have been at once mean and comfortless. The state apartments, indeed, were surrounded with hangings, composed for the most part of tapestry, or painted silk; but this circumstance is to be attributed rather to the necessity of the case, than to any taste which they possessed for expensive luxuries. In proof of this, the following anecdote of the great Alfred may be given. As there were no such things as clocks, or watches, or dials in his day, Alfred adopted a very simple expedient to mark the course of time. He caused a candle to be made of sufficient length to burn from one sunrise to another, and dividing it by notches into a certain number of portions, calculated by the

consumption of these how the hours were passing. He soon discovered, however, in setting it up in his saloon, that something more was necessary, inasmuch as the crevices in the walls admitted a current of air which rendered all his calculations untrue. To remedy this defect, his first impulse had been to enclose the candle in a horn lantern, but even that expedient answered but imperfectly; so he caused hangings to be suspended round the walls of the room, and for his own comfort's sake kept them there ever after. Still the furniture of these halls, though composed of the most heterogeneous materials, was, on the whole, costly and striking. The seats were mere wooden benches or settles, the footstools, on the contrary, were very gaudy, and the tables, always costly, were, in the dwellings of the nobles, inlaid, and, in some instances, coated over, with gold or silver. With respect, again, to plate, the wealthy thanes made a great display in silver candlesticks, drinking-cups, and mirrors, while the lower classes fabricated the first of these implements out of bone, and drank always from vessels made of polished horn. All rude warriors are fond of ornamenting their weapons with the precious metals; and in this respect the Saxons were not backward. Many of their sword-hilts were composed of solid gold, being studded with jewels; while their bridles, saddles, housings, and horse-furniture, shone not unfrequently with silver. Nor were these the only luxuries in which they indulged. The use of spices was common among them, as well as the warm-bath, though to the cold they appear to have imbibed a strange aversion; and, as they generally walked in travelling, it was esteemed an act of hospitality to provide a plentiful supply of warm water for the feet.

The principal diversions of the Anglo-Saxons were hunting and hawking. In both they took especial pleasure; nor were bear-baiting, horse-racing, and such-

like games, infrequent among them. Within doors they played with dice; but their chief delight was in banqueting, listening to the songs of their harpers, and watching or joining in the feats of dancers and tumblers. In all their domestic amusements, and not infrequently in the sports of the field, the females of the family were permitted freely to take part: for among the Anglo-Saxons, the women were treated not merely with kindness but with consideration, and as members of the community they, equally with the men, lived under the general protection of the laws. Thus they were liable to sue and be sued in their own names, and deemed capable of inheriting and disposing of property; besides which, dowries were secured to them, in the event of their husband's demise, by settlements entered into previous to marriage, and the very term of their widowhood was fixed at twelve months. Still it were an error to suppose, that any excess of refinement marked the intercourse which subsisted between the sexes, either before or after marriage. The Anglo-Saxons were not sufficiently civilized to allot to woman the exact place which she is entitled to fill in social life; though, like other Gothic nations, they approached nearer to the truth in that respect than the more luxurious tribes of the East.

It was stated in a previous chapter, that the population of England, in the days of the Saxon monarchs, was divided into four classes, namely, the nobles, the free-men, the freed-men, and the slaves. There were two kinds of nobility in those times—one, hereditary, the other, territorial. Hereditary nobility, or that which a man derived from the accident of birth, was very rarely the source of power or political advantages. The nobility which arose from the possession of property, on the other hand, brought with it privileges which varied in a degree proportionate to the extent of territory over which the authority of the noble might be

established. Thus, in Athelstan's reign, every ceorle or free-man, who owned five hides of land, a church, a kitchen, and a bell-house, had a burgage seat, with rank as thane. A similar mark of honour was conferred upon the merchant who had twice crossed the sea with his goods; and both might attain to the loftier station of earls: but it required the lordship of forty hides* to qualify the noble to hold a seat in the Wittenagemot—of the duties and constitution of which an account will be given by and by. With respect to the freemen, even though filling menial offices, they were not amenable to corporal punishment, and might, at pleasure, change their masters, as is the case with domestic servants at the present day: but for the crime of theft, or for the violation of the Sabbath, they were liable to be reduced to slavery, when, of course, both these privileges ceased. The slaves, again, were, as they are in other countries, the absolute property of their owners, though it does not appear that they were often sold, or otherwise disposed of, except as part of the stock upon the land†. They seem, moreover, to have been, upon the whole, kindly treated by their masters. They were allowed to accumulate property; they might be redeemed by another, and they not unfrequently purchased their own manumission. But in spite of these alleviating circumstances, their condition was sufficiently pitiable, as the severity of the punishments inflicted upon them attests.

Amid the rural population all trades and handicrafts were carried on entirely by slaves. This is proved by the tenour of many deeds and grants which have come

* The hide of land was equal to 120 acres, consequently, the estates of the higher nobility would not measure less than 4800 acres.

† Previous to the establishment of Christianity, slaves were sold in the market-place, but the barbarous proceeding was prohibited in later times, to which alone our sketch applies.

down to us, by one of which the brother of Earl Godwin "gives to a monastery a manor with its appendages; that is, his overseer and all his chattels, his smith, carpenter, fisherman, miller, all their servants, and all their goods and chattels." By degrees, however, as the manumission of slaves became more frequent, a new order of things prevailed. Many of the manumitted artificers removed into towns and burghs, and occupying houses, where they looked to the king, or some other noble, as their liege lord, became, by the payment of certain dues, and the performance of certain services, what were called free-burghers or burgesses. Among the free-burghers there soon sprang up guilds, or associations for the promotion of trade, and the encouragement of art. These, which were formed after the model of institutions still more ancient,—institutions which had brought men together for purposes of mutual defence and good-will,—became, by degrees, important limbs of the body politic, having their own laws, their own hall of meeting, and their own possessions, with proper officers to administer the first, and regulate the management of the others. Domesday-book makes mention of the schalla, or guildhall of the burghers of Dover, while those of Canterbury, besides collecting certain customs, held of the sovereign thirty-three acres of land in their guild. It is true, that the burghers were subject to heavy exactions; tolls being imposed upon their markets, and sums of money levied as dues, by their superior, to whom they looked up on various occasions. Nevertheless, their condition, as compared with that of the servile classes, was highly enviable. They were the only order of freemen, properly so called, who were not actual freeholders of land.

The handicrafts chiefly in repute among the Anglo-Saxons, were those of the smith, the carpenter, the shoemaker, or worker in leather, the weaver, the

embroiderer, and the dyer. Of these some were accounted so honourable, that many monks practised them;—indeed, Dunstan himself is said, among his other accomplishments, to have been a skilful mechanic. He drew patterns for a lady's robe, worked in all metals, and founded two great bells for his church at Abingdon. Glass-making, on the other hand, was unknown in England till late in the seventh century, when Benedict, the abbot of Weremouth, procured artists from France, by whom the windows of his church were glazed. It is worthy of remark, that the state of the church at this time, and the friendly intercourse which subsisted between the clergy of one nation and those of another, proved eminently serviceable in promoting the growth of all useful arts and their general dissemination throughout Europe.

Spinning, among the Anglo-Saxons, was conducted entirely by the women, and women of all ranks span. For the universality of the practice, indeed, the female portion of his family are, in the will of Alfred the Great, termed the Spindleside; while our own word spinster, though now used to denote an unmarried female exclusively, may be clearly traced back to the same origin.

We have spoken of the tolls exacted from goods which were exposed for sale in the public markets. A similar tax pressed hard upon foreign commerce, as port-dues, exacted for the king's use, upon all merchandise brought from beyond seas. It is true, that the foreign trade of the Anglo-Saxons appears never to have been extensive, though the harbour of London, so early as the seventh century, is described as well-frequented. But if they were but little adventurous in the prosecution of trade, the Anglo-Saxons seem to have been hardy fishers—pursuing not merely such of the finny race as were profitable for food, but the whale itself, on account of the teeth and skin, out of which they manufac-

tured ropes. In their inland journeys, this people always travelled armed. They were, as was said a little while ago, extremely hospitable,—in spite of the law, which rendered the host responsible for the conduct of the guest to whom he might afford shelter beyond the space of three days; yet there prevailed some strange customs among them in reference to this matter. Every wayfaring man who quitted the high road, or entered a wood, no matter for what purpose, was bound to shout aloud, or blow a horn, under the penalty of being treated as a thief.

The Anglo-Saxons made use of coined money in silver and copper; the gold seems to have passed current by weight, at least no gold coin of Anglo-Saxon monarchs has, as far as we know, been discovered. They computed by pounds, shillings, pence, and farthings; and it is somewhat remarkable, that with them, as with us, twelve pence made one shilling, and twenty shillings one pound. It is necessary, however, to add, that there were two kinds of penny, the greater and the less; that of the former, five composed a shilling; and that in very old times twenty of the latter were required to make up the same amount. They had also the mancus, equal to thirty pence, and the marc or half-pound. Previous to Alfred's reign all the calculations were made by pennies; during the government of that prince shillings appear to have been substituted*, though there are several documents extant in which the pound and the penny are likewise specified. Besides these, we find the *ora* mentioned, and the *scætta*, of which the last seems to have been the smaller penny; while the greater penny is on all occa-

* The young reader may be informed, that in this respect the Portuguese of the present day somewhat resemble the Anglo-Saxons. They compute by reals, the smallest of imaginable coins, of which some thousands are necessary to make up the amount of a few shillings.

sions expressed by the word "penning." For their first knowledge of the art of coining, the Anglo-Saxons were indebted to the Roman ecclesiastics; some of whom, down to a comparatively late period, continued to coin money equally with the king.

There can be no doubt of the existence among the Anglo-Saxons of the feudal system, as well as of their acquaintance with an order of chivalry,—institutions which have been sometimes unguardedly represented as introduced into England at the period of the Norman conquest. We find, for example, that all lands were held of the crown on the condition of military service; besides being liable to the construction of bridges and castles at the king's behest. Thus, five hides of land were burdened with the supply of one soldier in time of war; one hide was required to furnish one man, for the repair or construction of a bridge or castle. The burghers also were subject to the same services in a proportion which was fixed by custom; and it rested with the king alone to remit them. Nor was it the sovereign who exclusively asserted a feudal supremacy. Each of the great nobles had under him vassals, or lesser thanes, over whom he exercised judicial authority, and from whom he exacted services similar to those which he himself paid to the crown. All the lands in the kingdom, in addition to those owned by monasteries, were divided among five orders of men, of which the three first only may be regarded as proprietors in chief. The king, whose domains were very extensive; the archbishops and bishops; the earls; and after them, though at a long interval, even the thanes and ceorls. Some of these, though in all other respects proprietors, were not permitted to sell or alienate their estates; others paid for them annually a fixed amount in money, or, as we should term it, a quit-rent; while a third part performed especial service, such as ploughing, sowing, reaping, and gathering in the harvest of a

small portion, for the benefit of the superior. In cases where the parties possessed the right of bequeathing or selling their lands, certain established forms of conveyance were used; while a disputed succession, or the merits of a bargain unfulfilled, were referred to the decision of a jury, or gemot.

The order of chivalry recognised among the Anglo-Saxons differed in many respects from that of the Normans, but was not less strongly marked, or less highly esteemed. It partook, perhaps, more of the character of a religious distinction; for, besides being preceded by fasting and penance, it was conferred only by the hands of an abbot or other churchman. The mode of bestowing it was this: when the aspirant had completed his term of probation, and solemnly confessed his sins, the abbot girded him with a belt, and laid upon his shoulders the blade of a naked sword. He was then pronounced to be a thegne or miles; a title which, in later times, merged in that of knight.

I have said that, at an early period after their arrival in Britain, the Saxons began to turn their attention to agriculture. They soon made so much progress, as to divide their fields by means of hedges and ditches, and to rear in each the particular crop to which the soil might appear to be adapted. Besides these enclosures, they had extensive commons, on which they fed their flocks; and patches of wood attached to each farm, of which they were exceedingly careful. Of their predilection for swine's-flesh I have already spoken; and it will naturally be surmised that they reared large flocks of these animals. They were not, however, neglectful of cattle, and still less so of sheep, which constituted no inconsiderable portion of their wealth. With respect to the implements in use among them, these seem to have closely resembled our own: for it appears they had ploughs, rakes, sickles, scythes, forks, and flails, besides carts and waggons; windmills,

too, and watermills, by no means of rude construction. Of the order in which they performed the labours of agriculture, some idea may be gathered from the illuminations and rude paintings which have come down to us. One of these describes the operations of the year in the following manner. In January, men are represented as ploughing with four oxen in a yoke, of whom one drives, another holds the plough, and a third scatters seed. In February, they cut or prune trees, among which are the vine. In March, one digs, another wields a pickaxe, a third sows. April appears to have been an idle month, for in the illumination alluded to three persons are sitting and drinking, with two attendants, while two men sit apart, one pouring liquor into a horn, the other holding a horn to his mouth. In May, a shepherd sits with a lamb in his lap; his flocks are scattered round him, and there is a group of spectators in the background. In June, some are reaping with sickles; some load a cart with sheaves of corn; and one man blows a horn. In July, men fell trees. In August, they mow the grass. September is devoted to boar-hunting: October to hawking: November to the labours of the smithy. In December, there is threshing, measuring the grain, and heaping it into baskets, in the presence of one who seems to reckon the quantity by the aid of a notched stick.

Notwithstanding that their seasons seem to have been more severe than ours, the effect, no doubt, of imperfect drainage, the Saxons, undeniably, cultivated the vine,—at least we find in their deeds of sale and bequest frequent mention made of vineyards. Whether the grapes raised were of a quality to produce good wine, may admit of a doubt; yet wine was too common a beverage among them to be derived entirely from foreign countries. Be this, however, as it may, we know that they carried their horticultural skill to a considerable extent; and it is a curious fact, that of the

places most renowned at the present day for extensive gardens, many had acquired their peculiar celebrity when Domesday-book was written. In the same document mention is made of "parks of beasts of the wood," such as the park of Rislepe, in Middlesex, of St. Alban's, and Ware, in Herts; while fisheries in the rivers seem to have been even then attached not unfrequently to portions of land. I will only add to this account of their agricultural operations, that, of all the lands in the kingdom, those owned by monasteries and churches were, during the times of which I now speak, by far the best cultivated and the most productive.

We come now to a consideration of the political institutions of the Anglo-Saxons, including their government and their laws, their modes of administering justice, of inflicting punishment, and redressing grievances. The most important office among the Saxons was that of Cyning, or King, which, as has been shown elsewhere, was anciently elective, and which, at the close of the war, or at the termination of any particular service, the holder was accustomed to resign. There cannot be a doubt, that when Hengist, Ella, Cerdic, and Ida, invaded Britain, they and the other chiefs who succeeded in establishing themselves in the island, came with the rank of war-kings only. But to retain a territory acquired from a people who ceased not to struggle for its recovery, required a continuance of the same powers which had been wielded in its acquisition; and hence the kingly authority, instead of being laid aside, as custom required, became confirmed in the persons of the individuals to whom it had been committed. That it should have ceased by degrees, under such circumstances, to be regarded as a temporary institution, is not at all surprising; particularly when the condition of the conquered country with respect

to the distribution of property comes to be considered. The British kings possessed extensive domains, and a degree of influence proportionate to their wealth. These became naturally the spoil of their Saxon successors, as the place of the British nobles was claimed and obtained by the Saxon chiefs of lesser note; so that in the end there grew up a Saxon nobility, fencing round and securing their sovereign in his rights. As the one order of men, however, claimed the privilege of transmitting their estates to their posterity, so were they willing that the other should demise the crown to his natural heirs, subject only to certain restrictions, which appear never to have been relaxed. The kings of the Anglo-Saxons became confirmed in their powers only by the voice of the Wittenagemot, which altered without scruple the line of succession as often as the exigences of the times seemed to require.

Once established on the throne, however, and acknowledged as sovereign by the great council, the prince became master of numerous prerogatives, and guarded by numerous immunities. "He was prayed for, and voluntarily honoured; his word was to be taken without an oath; he had the right of pardoning in certain cases; his *mund-byrd* and his *were*, were larger than those of any other class in society; his safety was cared for by high penalties for offences committed in his presence or habitation, or against his family; he had the lordship of the free; he had the option to sell over sea, to kill, or to take the price of a freeman thief; also to sell a theon* over sea, or take a penalty: he could mitigate penalties and remit them; before his tribunal thieves were brought, his was the last court of appeal; he was the executive superintendent of the general laws, and usually received the fines imposed upon crimes; the Jews

* A slave.

were his property; the high executive officers, Ealdermen, Genefas, Thegns, and others, were liable to be displaced by him. He convoked the councils of the Witan, summoned the people to the army, and commanded it when embodied. His dignity, again, was supported out of demesne lands, which abounded in all parts of the kingdom, and he had many palaces or seats, of which one, namely, Windsor, continues to this day a royal residence. Yet, with all these advantages, the Anglo-Saxon princes exercised by no means an unlimited sovereignty. Their rights, their lands, their duties, were, on the contrary, as accurately defined as those of the meanest of their subjects, who appear to have been not less jealous of royal encroachments, than they were prompt to pay to royalty the respect which was due.

The army of the Anglo-Saxons was rather a feudal militia, than a body of regular troops, whose time of service was limited, for the most part, to two months, and which was paid, clothed, and armed, by the proprietors of land. Five hides, as was shown above, sent forth an armed man, and each hide furnished for his maintenance, the sum of four shillings. The penalty of non-attendance, however, when regularly summoned, amounted to a forfeiture of the estate; and a fine of fifty shillings was levied, in case a substitute had been promised and failed to appear. No man could quit the camp or expedition without obtaining the king's permission; nor was it lawful for any one to join it, without a similar authority were given. The king's fleets were generally equipped and ready to put to sea about Easter.

The Wittenagemot, or great council of the nation, has more than once been alluded to. It consisted of the king, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, sometimes of the queen, and always of the greater thanes, and occasionally even of knights or milites. During the

existence of the Heptarchy, each kingdom had its own Wittenagemot; when the seven passed under the rule of the same crown, one Wittenagemot sufficed for all. How the proprietors of forty hides exercised their rights, each being qualified to sit in the assembly, does not exactly appear. It is probable that they elected representatives, inasmuch as their numbers were too great for any hall to contain them, while the distance of many from the place of meeting would throw an insuperable obstacle in the way of their attendance. But however this might be, the council itself came together on summons from the king, at any spot which he might appoint, and generally at the seasons of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. When the king had opened the session with a speech, the Wittenagemot proceeded to the despatch of business, under which head was comprehended the general superintendence of the affairs of the nation, in church as well as in state. If the crown had demised, they elected a successor; if the throne were full, they aided the king in enacting laws, and contracting treaties with foreign powers. Before them the great nobles were impeached, as in the case of Earl Godwin; they made grants of land, and sometimes reversed those already settled by the sovereign. The condition of the churches and monasteries came under their care; and they received appeals from the decisions of inferior courts, in civil as well as in criminal causes. Taxation, also, which dates its origin from the reign of Ethelred, was by them regulated and commanded. With all these constitutional powers placed within their reach, it is not surprising to find, that the Wittenagemots became, at times, too strong for the monarch, and that their hall of meeting was occasionally converted into an arena for the conduct of seditious contests.

Inferior to the Wittenagemot, were the *Sheremot* and *Folkmot*; both of them, as the names denote, pro-

vincial or county meetings. The former, which consisted of the bishops, the earl or *ealderman*, the earl's son, and two persons as bearers of the king's writ, by the authority of which it sat, of the *gerefa* or sheriff, and the *thegnes*, tried all causes, civil and criminal, in which the landowners were parties. The latter, even while the sheriff presided, dealt chiefly with merchants, burghers, and persons of lower degree. But in both, pleadings were heard, and evidence taken, to decide upon the merits of which was the business of a jury, consisting, like that still in use among ourselves, of twelve members, and sworn to give a verdict according to truth. Thus, in one of Ethelred's laws, it is said, "Let there be *gemots* in every *wæpentace*, and let twelve of the eldest *thegnes* go out with the *gerefa*, and swear upon the relics which shall be given into their hands, that they will condemn no innocent man, nor screen any that is guilty*." There was, however, another mode of trial, to which the accused sometimes submitted, namely, that by ordeal, when his guilt or innocence was decided, according as he found himself able, or otherwise, to carry a ball of hot iron, or remove a stone from a vessel of boiling water with his bare hands. But this, in which a great deal of deceit was used, though originally much esteemed, fell by degrees into disrepute; till, in the end, the trial by jury almost entirely set it aside.

There prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons various distinctions of rank and of duty, which descended in gradation from those of the sovereign to those of the

* The origin of juries seems to have been this. When a person was accused of any crime, he sometimes, in default of evidence on both sides, referred his case to the judgment of twelve men of respectability; and if these swore that they did not believe him guilty, he was acquitted. They were, in consequence, called jurators, or swearers, whence our word jurors.

ceorle. Among subjects the most influential was the *ealderman* or earl, who, ranking with the bishop, acted as governor of the shire or county, led its forces, and presided at its assemblies. Next to him was the *gerefa* or sheriff, a civil officer, who acted as judge, presided in the *folkmot*, was charged with the preservation of the public peace, and the safe custody of prisoners, and who was punishable by fine and confiscation, in case his duties were neglected. Then came the *thegnes*, of which there were two sorts: the king's *thegnes*, who enjoyed feudal privileges, acted as magistrates and jurors, were tried by their peers, and in some instances transmitted their prerogatives to their posterity; and, secondly, the common *thegnes*, a much more numerous, though a less influential, body. These assisted at *sheremots*, and sat as jurors in *folkmots*. The *ceorles* appear to have possessed no political importance, and to have exercised no authority.

Almost all offences among the Anglo-Saxons, not excepting that of murder itself, were commutable for a pecuniary fine. For every man's life, indeed, a ransom was fixed, called his *were*, on payment of which to the family of the deceased, the homicide might go free; provided he were likewise prompt in discharging the *wile*, or fine, to which the king at the same time laid claim. For the protection of a man's house, again,—and all whom it was supposed to shelter,—another mulct was established; to which, under the appellation of *mund*, the brawler, or violator of domestic peace, became liable. In like manner adultery, theft, injuries done to the person, all were punishable by fine; the amount levied varying according to the rank of the party injured, and sometimes of the individual by whom the injury was committed. Thus the king's *were* and *mund* were both considerably greater than those of the earl, the *were* and *mund* of the earl were greater than

those of the *thegne*, and so on, till the scale came so low as to reach the *ceorle*, and even the *theon*. It is, however, necessary to add, that theft was very severely punished, not unfrequently with death itself; and that, to guard against dishonest dealing, no man was permitted to sell goods above the value of twenty pennies, except within the gates of a city or borough.

The system of mutual responsibility or suretiship, of which Alfred is said to have been the author, formed one of the most remarkable of all the institutions to which the Anglo-Saxons lived in obedience. By it the counties were divided into hundreds, and the hundreds into tithings, so that in every tithing or circle, which included ten families, all the members were answerable for the good behaviour of each, and each for the good behaviour of all. The consequence was, that from one end of the kingdom to the other, there prevailed a universal responsibility; which, however much it might tend to preserve order, and suppress crime, kept men constantly on the rack. In like manner, the *gildes* or corporations of trades were held to a certain extent answerable for their members. Should one of these commit an offence, and prove unable to pay the fine, the *gilde* became liable, and the money was exacted generally without mercy. But it is time to bring this somewhat tedious discussion to a close, and to resume the thread of a narrative, which becomes more interesting as we go on.

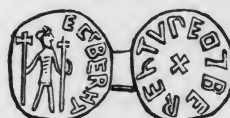
EARLY BRITISH COINS.



Cunobeline—Silver.



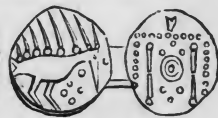
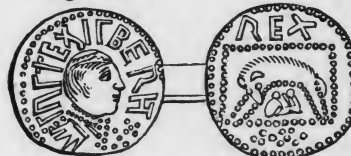
Cunobeline—Gold.



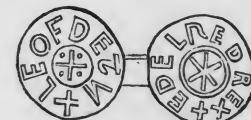
Egbert—819.



Ethelbert—860.

Earliest Anglo-Saxon—
about 500.

Ethelbert of Kent—592.



Ethelred of Northumberland—866.



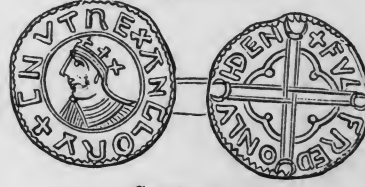
Offa, King of Mercia—700.



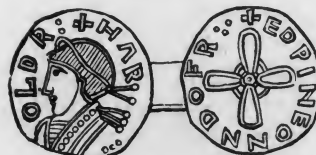
Alfred—872.



Ethelstan—924.



Canute—1017.



Harold—1035.



Edward the Confessor—1042.

CHAPTER V.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.—HIS EARLY HISTORY.—SUBDUES ENGLAND.—REBELLION OF HIS SON ROBERT.—HIS DEATH.—IS SUCCEEDED BY HIS SECOND SON, WILLIAM RUFUS.—HIS VICES.—IS KILLED WHILE HUNTING IN THE NEW FOREST.—HENRY THE FIRST.—HIS WARS WITH HIS BROTHER ROBERT.—DISPUTES WITH THE CHURCH.—HIS SUCCESES.—LOSS OF HIS SON.—HIS DEATH AND CHARACTER.

[A.D. 1066 to A.D. 1135.]

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, the warrior by whom the battle of Hastings was won, derived his descent from Rollo, the illustrious Northman chief, who wrested from Charles the Simple the sovereignty in fief of the important province of Normandy. William, though illegitimate, had succeeded his father, Robert, in the duchy, while yet a child of eight years of age, and displayed, as manhood began to open, all the virtues which, in those rude days, best qualified men for offices of trust and command. He suppressed a dangerous revolt, which occurred within his own dominions, he waged a successful war against his neighbours, and scrupled not to resist and to repel the encroachments of his liege lord, the king of France. A marriage with Matilda, the daughter of the puissant earl of Flanders, moreover, and the acquisition of the county of Maine, added largely to his resources, and rendered him one of the most powerful of the lesser sovereigns of Europe; well qualified to afford an asylum to the fugitive king of England, and not indisposed to take advantage of any accident that might arise out of the tie which was thus formed. Of the grounds on which he rested his claim to be regarded as heir to the Anglo-Saxon throne, an account has already been given. It remains to detail

the measures which he adopted for the purposes of improving the important advantages, of which the fall of his rival had put him in possession.

After halting a few days to refresh his troops, and detaching a force to reduce Romney, and to chastise its inhabitants, William marched upon Dover; which, after a feeble resistance, opened its gates, and gave him possession as it were of the keys of England. He then pushed for London, where, in a tumultuous meeting of the Wittenagemot, Edgar Atheling had been proclaimed king, and where Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, with two powerful earls, Edwin and Morcar, were at the head of a disorderly and undisciplined army. The approach of the conqueror, and the defeat of a body of Londoners, by a very inferior force of Norman cavalry, sufficed to break the spirits of the people of the south. All Kent submitted without striking a blow, and even the capital displayed no inclination to risk much in a struggle for independence. One after another, too, the leading men of the kingdom gave in their submission. Stigand met William at Wallingford, on the Thames, and acknowledged him as his sovereign; and even Edwin and Morcar, finding their efforts fail to organize a force adequate to resistance, made a merit of necessity, and laid down their arms. Overawed by these signs of treachery, and alarmed by the conflagrations which extended through Buckinghamshire, and a part of Herts, to the town of Southwark, London opened its gates, and William, marching in, consented to be proclaimed king, and gave orders that his coronation should take place during the ensuing Christmas festivities.

The preparations which William considered it necessary to make in anticipation of this ceremony, evinced little confidence in the fidelity of his new subjects. He caused a house to be fortified for his reception, which has since grown into the Tower of London; and on the

day of the coronation, surrounded Westminster Abbey with Norman soldiers. How far it was his intention, at this stage in his career, to treat the vanquished with harshness, is uncertain. Most of his proceedings would seem to imply the reverse, for he extended a ready pardon to many of the thanes who had been in arms against him, and confirmed to Edgar Atheling, his pageant rival, the dignity of earl of Oxford, which the Confessor had bestowed upon him. But round his standard were collected adventurers from every country in Europe, with whose hopes of plunder and advancement, a state of quiet was altogether at variance. These stirred up the Norman guards, during the progress of the ceremony, to attack the people, on the plea that they believed the person of the monarch to be in danger; and a serious tumult ensued, in which many lives were lost, and many houses plundered. It does not exactly appear how far this affair operated injuriously for the English in the mind of William; but it is certain that his treatment of them became, from thenceforth, more and more stern every day. He disarmed London and the other great towns, and bridled them with citadels, into which he threw garrisons of foreign troops. All real power he transferred without scruple to the Normans, whom he enriched with estates, which then began to be forfeited, as well as with portions from the royal demesne. Nor was he neglectful of the church, to whose partiality he stood deeply indebted. There was an ancient tribute to the See of Rome, called Peter's pence, with which Ethelbert, in a moment of superstitious devotion, had burdened his country, but which, amid the confusion of late times, had been very irregularly paid. This William renewed, sending at the same time Harold's standard to the Pope, while at home he built and endowed an abbey, on the site of the battle of Hastings; and caused masses to be daily chanted there for the

repose of the souls of the slain. Finally, having secured the persons of Edgar, of the earls Morcar and Edwin, and of various other Saxon chiefs, he departed for the continent,—leaving the English, as he imagined, destitute of national leaders, to the management of Odo, bishop of Bayeux, his brother by the mother's side, and William Fitzosborne, one of his most illustrious officers.

At the period of which we are now treating, the hold which William possessed upon the sovereignty of England was far from being secure. In the counties south of the Humber, indeed, or to express myself more accurately, in that part of England which lies on the south and east side of a line drawn from the skirts of Hampshire to the edge of Norfolk, the forts which he had erected gave him what is called military occupation of the country. All beyond that line, however, retained, to a certain extent, its independence,—that is to say, the thanes acknowledged no superior, paid no tribute, and continued to manage their estates, and govern their vassals, according to the example of immemorial usage. It is probable, too, that the absence of the Conqueror himself, while it relaxed the bond of discipline among his Norman adherents, encouraged his new subjects to hatch plots, and enter into conspiracies. Be this, however, as it may, William had not quitted England many weeks, before disturbances began to break out in various quarters. It was to no purpose that Odo exercised the powers intrusted to him with merciless rigour. The Saxons, too feeble to take the field, wreaked their vengeance upon their oppressors in numerous private assassinations, and, at length, arranged a plan for the general extermination of the foreigners during the fast of Ash Wednesday. By some means or another, information relative to this desperate conspiracy reached the regent. It was immediately communicated to William, who hurried back

at the head of a gallant army, to baffle and chastise its authors.

From that time forth William regarded the English as his enemies, and dealt with them as with a people to be governed only by the strong arm of power. The terror of his name had driven multitudes of their chiefs into exile, and among others, Edgar, the rightful heir to the throne, who fled into Scotland. Against the remainder he carried on what may be termed a war of extermination, which lasted several years. His first campaign led him into Devonshire, where he reduced the Saxons, though assisted by their neighbours the Britons of Cornwall. In a second, he overran, after severe fighting, and a gallant resistance at Oxford, Worcester, Nottingham, Leicester, and Lincoln, all the middle counties as far as York. From these quarters he was recalled by a general insurrection in the west, at the head of which a son of Harold had placed himself, and which was not put down without considerable difficulty. His third campaign opened less auspiciously, by the capture of York by the Saxons, and the proclamation there of Edgar Atheling. But William, who was never wanting to himself, marched promptly to the point where danger seemed most prominent, and avenged, in a manner truly barbarous, the insults to which his dignity had been subjected. "From York to Durham," says William of Malmsbury, "not an inhabited village remained. Fire, slaughter, and desolation, made it a vast wilderness, which it continues to this day*." Thus was the whole of England reduced at the point of the sword, while the measures adopted to ensure its continued obedience, were not less cruel than those used in its subjugation. Almost all the estates of the Saxon nobility were forfeited, and granted,

* William of Malmsbury wrote sixty years after the campaign of 1069.

on strictly feudal tenure, to Normans. The English bishops and clergy, likewise, including Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, were degraded, and their places filled by foreigners; while, to sum up all, an edict was sent forth, which forbade any Englishman, on pain of death, to burn a light in his dwelling after the bell had tolled the curfew. Of that tyrannical law the memory is still preserved, by the tolling of what is called the curfew-bell, in many of the towns and villages of England.

From this time forth a new order of things, in many respects, prevailed throughout England. The ancient military usages were set aside, and the lands of the kingdom, being divided into what were called knights' fees, became liable to supply the sovereign with sixty thousand men at arms, regimented and accoutred in full harness. Each man at arms, again, was expected to bring along with him a certain retinue of lighter cavalry, archers, and spearmen,—so that the whole male population of the kingdom became, in the strictest sense of the term, liable, at the sovereign's requisition, to military service. In addition to this custom were introduced what are called the feudal incidents,—that is to say, certain liabilities to which every landowner was subject, and for a disregard of which his estate became actually forfeited to his immediate superior. Thus each baron, in order to obtain the investiture of his fee, was bound to appear bare-headed and unarmed in the presence of his sovereign, to swear that he would be true to him, and defend him against all his enemies. Attendance at court also, as often as required, was provided for: it was established, that in the event of failure of heirs the estate should escheat to the crown; that as often as the estate passed from one possessor to another, the liege lord should be entitled to a sum of money, a horse, a cow, or some other mark of vas-

salage,—that in case of need, each estate should be liable to a contribution, under the appellation of aid; that during minority the liege lord should enjoy the profits of the property; and that on the marriage of every female the lord should be entitled to a fine. The same principle held good as the order of society fell, each lesser proprietor paying this species of subjection to the superior of whom he held, till the whole kingdom became, in a certain sense, divided into a multitude of petty, and almost sovereign principalities.

It was not, however, into the military institutions of the country alone that William introduced numerous innovations. The Norman became henceforth the language of the court and of the legal tribunals,—the spiritual power was separated from the temporal by the restriction of the bishops and their officials to the exercise of judicial authority in spiritual causes only; and in the room of the Anglo-Saxon ordeal, was introduced the custom of wager of battle. By this, a person accused was at liberty, under certain restrictions, to challenge his accuser to the field, and with whomsoever victory rested, truth was supposed to lie. Then, again, numerous changes were effected in the amount of the fines imposed upon particular offences, and the kinds of offence to which pecuniary mulcts were permitted to extend. But that which pressed with peculiar hardship upon the natives, was the renewal of the Danegelt, which William extended, without discrimination, to all the lands in the kingdom. From these various sources the Conqueror contrived to accumulate a revenue, which rendered him at once more wealthy and more powerful than any monarch of his day; and placed him, to all appearance at least, above the wants and difficulties to which even monarchs are sometimes liable.

Notwithstanding these brilliant achievements, and

the great power and influence which they put into his hands, the latter days of William's life were far from being happy. There broke out, from time to time, insurrections in England, in which the Norman barons joined, and which it required all his vigilance and activity to suppress. But that which distressed him more than any other incident, was the rebellion of his eldest son Robert, whom he had appointed regent of Normandy. This prince, on the plea that his father had bound himself to resign the duchy, in case the meditated attack on England should prove successful, claimed to be treated as a sovereign prince, and on the rejection of his suit, took up arms. William passed over to the continent at the head of an army, composed chiefly of English, and soon drove the rebel from his dominions; who, being secretly supported by the king of France, took shelter in the castle of Gerberoi. Thither the Conqueror followed, and during the siege one of those adventures befell, to which the customs of that chivalrous age could alone give rise. It chanced that during a sally, William and Robert met man to man. Each was ignorant of the rank and person of the enemy to whom he was opposed; till Robert, more active, because younger and less corpulent than his father, beat William from his horse, and wounded him in the hand. The sound of the fallen warrior's voice made him instantly aware of the crime of which he had been guilty, and he implored pardon on his knees. It was granted, and the unnatural struggle came to an end, without further mischief on either side.

William was at this time so unwieldy, that by the advice of his physicians he put himself under a course of medicine; a circumstance which, when communicated to the king of France, provoked him to indulge in idle railings. He said that the king of England was lying-in at Rouen; and the speech being repeated to that fiery monarch, he became grievously irritated. "Be it so."

said he; "but at my churching I shall light so many tapers that all France will see the blaze." He was as good as his word; for he no sooner recovered strength enough to sit a horse, than he carried fire and sword as far as the city of Mantes. His soldiers, in the wantonness of triumph, set the town in a blaze, and William was riding about to witness the spectacle, when his horse planted his foot among a heap of burning ashes, and began to plunge with great fury. William, as yet imperfectly recovered, and still inactive and heavy, was thrown forward upon the saddle, and received a bruise, from the effect of which he never recovered. He died on the 9th of September, 1087, after bequeathing to Robert, Normandy with its dependencies; to William, England; and to Henry a sum of five thousand pounds in silver.



Great Seal of William the Conqueror.

WHATEVER William's views might have been, and that he was stern and tyrannical, it is impossible to doubt, the merit cannot be denied to him of having possessed a more perfect knowledge of human nature, and a more consummate faculty of controlling it, than any other sovereign of his own, or almost any other age. He was succeeded by a prince who possessed some of his father's good qualities, and more than all his bad ones. William, surnamed Rufus, by reason of the ruddiness of his complexion, scarcely waited to close his father's eyes, ere he flew to take possession of the kingdom which had been bequeathed to him. He was crowned at Westminster, on the 26th of September, 1087, and endeavoured for a time, by a judicious distribution of the royal treasure, to ensure the support of the most influential among the barons. But he had not filled the throne many weeks, ere his brother Robert, at the instigation of Bishop Odo, and supported by many of the Norman barons, who possessed estates in both countries, made an effort to hurl him from his seat. The superior sagacity of William, and a prudent application of his pecuniary resources, repelled this danger, and turned it upon the wayward and feeble prince from whom it emanated. William appealed to his English subjects, and found them ready and devoted allies in a contest with the Normans. The consequence was, that after expelling Odo from the kingdom, and reducing others of his discontented barons to subjection, he passed over to Normandy, where war was carried on for some time greatly to his advantage. Nevertheless, William not only forgot the loyalty which his English subjects had displayed towards him, but heaped upon them burdens more grievous than those to which his father had rendered them subject. He enlarged more and more the royal parks and forests, in creating one of which, the Con-

queror had depopulated thirty square miles of country; and enacted the most savage laws for the purpose of preserving animals of the chase, and hindering the natives from enjoying a sport to which they were by long habit attached.

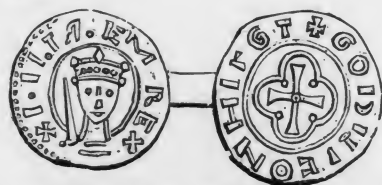
He was a grievous oppressor of the clergy, whose lands he seized without scruple, and in his private proceedings the most dissolute of men. Yet was his reign, if considered only with reference to its political character, an exceedingly prosperous one. Of his successes against Robert in the field, notice has already been taken: he still more effectually over-reached his inconsiderate relative in matters of diplomacy. It was during the reign of William Rufus, that the people of Europe first became inflamed with the desire of expelling the Saracens from Palestine, and establishing there a Christian monarchy. To this wild and romantic scheme they were allured by the preaching of Peter, the Hermit of Picardy, who, having witnessed the cruelties to which pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre were subjected, devoted all the energies of an extraordinary mind to the attainment of one object. Though treated for a while with coldness by the great, Peter made a deep impression on the feelings of the vulgar, and succeeded at last in conveying to the mind of Pope Urban the Second, some share of the enthusiasm which gave a character to his own. The merit of recovering from the blasphemers, by force of arms, the country in which the Redeemer had sojourned in the flesh and consummated his mission, became, therefore, a standing subject of declamation in all the cities and castles of Christendom. The project, which accorded well with the adventurous spirit of the times, was taken up with avidity; till in the end, kings, barons, knights, and yeomen, alike burned with zeal in the holy cause. A crusade was accordingly proclaimed, and from all quarters, multitudes gathered

round the sacred standard, each man distinguished by the holy symbol, a red cross, painted upon his garments. There was no prince in Europe to whom the expedition presented so many attractions as Robert of Normandy. He mortgaged his hereditary dominions to his brother William, and marched at the head of a chosen band, to toil for both a temporal and an eternal crown, under the walls of Jerusalem.

This addition to his territories, however much it might gratify the personal ambition of William, proved a source of considerable annoyance and expense to his English subjects. The Normans continually rebelled, and were kept under only by the expenditure of much blood and treasure; nevertheless, William endeavoured still more to enlarge his empire, by negotiating a similar bargain with the earls of Poitiers and Guienne. But ere the fleet or army could be assembled, with which he proposed to take possession, an accident befell him which caused a great change in the policy of England.

Abhorred by all classes, and tormented by the upbraidings of his own conscience, William fell into a state of extreme dejection; to dispel which, he repaired to the New Forest, his favourite scene of hunting. He had learned that predictions of his early death were generally circulated, and a superstitious conviction that they were not devoid of truth, preyed upon his mind. On the 1st of August, 1100, he passed a sleepless night, and alarmed by a dream which one of his attendants described to him, he refused, in the early part of the day, to quit the house. But eating and drinking at dinner more copiously than usual, his courage revived; and he called, at the conclusion of the meal, for his horse. The company went forth, and were soon separated in the hurry of the chase, and did not meet again till evening. The king was not among them. They sought him for awhile without success, and found him, at last, lying dead

beneath a tree, with an arrow fixed in his breast. By whom that arrow was shot, has never been satisfactorily ascertained. Tradition, indeed, attributes the deed to a French knight, named Walter Tyrrel, who is reputed to have avenged, by an accident, the wrongs of a suffering people; but as Walter himself denied the truth of the rumour, long after an acknowledgment could have wrought him no harm, it appears unfair to disbelieve his solemn declarations. Let the blow come from what hand it might, however, it occasioned no sorrow among the people of England, over whom a more licentious and arbitrary monarch had never exercised dominion.



Coin and Great Seal of William the Second.

HENRY THE FIRST, the younger brother of the king, who, by reason of his literary acquirements, had received the surname of Beauclerc, was among the number of guests who attended William on the present occasion. He no sooner ascertained his brother's fate, than, without delaying to see the corpse decently interred, he rode post to Winchester, where, after a slight resistance on the part of the keeper, he made himself master of what yet remained of the royal treasure. With such an engine at his control, he experienced no difficulty in securing the allegiance of a powerful party among the nobles. Within two days after his arrival he was crowned king, to the injury of those rights which Robert, his elder brother, was not at hand to urge or to defend.

Henry's first public acts held out to his subjects in general the prospect of a better and more equitable system of government, than they had yet experienced since the Conquest. He dismissed the unworthy instruments of his predecessor's pleasures; restored to the church its plundered rights; pledged himself to the exaction of moderate reliefs from his vassals, and to exercise his powers in wardship and marriage with lenity. That, however, which most of all gave satisfaction to the English, was an assurance that he "would restore to them the laws of King Edward, as amended by his father." There was something in this peculiarly gratifying to the feelings of men who still looked back with fondness to the memory of other times, and who had never known what the blessings of law and order were since the line of their ancient sovereigns was broken, and their old customs interrupted. Nor did Henry's anxiety to conciliate his people stop here. He found within the walls of a convent Maud, or Matilda, the daughter of Malcolm, king of Scotland, and the sister of King Edgar, with whom, as it was

known that she had never taken the vow, he contracted a marriage. By that politic act, the line of the Norman and Anglo-Saxon dynasties appeared to be united, and the right of Henry himself to the throne, which he had undeniably usurped, was rendered, in the eyes of the Saxons at least, incontrovertible, and even sacred.

Henry had not long completed this judicious arrangement, when his brother Robert returned from the Holy Land, bringing with him a fair bride, Sibilla, the daughter of the count of Conversana, in Italy. The chivalrous prince was enthusiastically received by his own subjects, and even among the Anglo-Normans there were many who, dazzled by his renown, promised him their aid in case he should attempt to gain possession of the English crown. Robert soon collected an army, with which he landed at Portsmouth, and Henry was not slow in taking the field against him; but no blood was shed. By the intervention of Anselm, now archbishop of Canterbury, a treaty of good-will was concluded, which, while it secured to Henry the sovereignty of England, rendered him liable to an annual payment to his brother Robert. It was stipulated, moreover, that on the demise of either of the brothers, the survivor should succeed to the dominions of both; and that the partisans on each side should receive a free pardon, and be secured in the possession of their estates.

Robert departed for the continent, but had scarcely reached it, ere his faithless brother proceeded to infringe upon the terms of the treaty. Several of the barons who had carried arms against him, were treated as rebels, and the remainder could not count upon his forbearance except from day to day. Robert hastened back to London, where, with his usual impetuosity, he upbraided the king of England with his faults; and whence he was glad to purchase the liberty of departure, by a surrender of his pension. When

there was so much ground of complaint on the one side, and of suspicion on the other, an abstinence from positive hostility could scarcely be expected. Henry now became the assailant, and on the 27th of September, 1106, overthrew the Norman army at Tinchebrai, where Robert, with ten thousand of his followers, were made prisoners. Henry could not afford to treat a man whom he had so deeply injured with generosity. The brave, but thoughtless, Robert was shut up in the castle of Cardiff, in Glamorganshire; where, his eyes having been put out, he died at the age of eighty, after a melancholy captivity which lasted almost thirty years.

In the meanwhile, Henry pursued his advantages till the whole of Normandy submitted to his rule. The son of his brother, likewise, a child of five years old, fell into his hands, at the surrender of Falaise; and being brought before him, began to weep, and to implore his uncle's clemency. It is said that Henry, after gazing upon the boy for some time, hastily desired that he should be removed, and intrusted him to the care of Elie de Saen, a Norman baron. But if he chose this man as a fit instrument by which to accomplish any foul purpose, he was deceived. Elie, hearing that the king designed to seize the child again, fled with him to the French court, where from Louis le Gros, the reigning monarch, he obtained a ready welcome, and honourable treatment.

While he considered himself in danger from the machinations of his brother and his adherents, Henry had taken care to keep on good terms with the church, notwithstanding a claim set up by Archbishop Anselm, in behalf of the prelates and abbots, of exemption from the ancient custom of homage. Hitherto, the ecclesiastical lord, on presentation to his dignities, had been in the habit, equally with the lay barons, of swearing allegiance to the monarch, and receiving from

him, as the badge of investiture, a ring and crosier. The Church of Rome became, by degrees, jealous of what was declared, in more than one council, to be an interference with the spiritual authority, and a violent controversy began, which threatened, at one period, to bring the kingdom under the curse of an excommunication. Henry, powerful as he was, felt himself unable to hold out against the threats of the supreme pontiff. He therefore consented to a compromise, by which it was established, that in all time coming, bishops should do homage for their temporalities alone; while the ring and crosier, the symbols, as they were termed, of spiritual authority, should be presented to them by the Pope, as head of the church.

While this contest was going on, William, the child to whom reference was lately made, grew up to man's estate, and gave proof that, in addition to his father's courage and firmness, he possessed no inconsiderable share of his grandfather's sagacity. His claim to the duchy of Normandy was recognized by Louis; and Baldwin, earl of Flanders, as well as Fulk, earl of Anjou, espoused for a time the same cause. During more than three years, a war was waged, which led to no very important results, and which was, at last, decided on the plain of Brenneville, in a combat which cost the lives of only three men-at-arms.

In this action, not only Louis and Henry, but William, the son of Henry, and William of Normandy, were all personally engaged. It was maintained by five hundred English against six hundred French knights, and ended in the discomfiture of the latter, in spite of a display of heroism which the temper of the combatants on both sides rendered more fatiguing, perhaps, than dangerous.

Worsted in the field, Louis now referred the decision of the quarrel to the Pope, and Henry, though resolute to maintain what he had won by the sword,

consented to attend at the council of Rheims. The pontiff was not unwilling to undertake an office which seemed to strengthen his claims to be regarded as supreme head of Christendom. He decided that Henry should retain possession of Normandy, and that Prince William, to whom his father intrusted the government of the Duchy, should do homage to the king of France, as his liege lord.

Perhaps no English monarch ever attained to a higher pitch of prosperity than that of which Henry appeared to be now in possession. He had recovered all the hereditary domains of his house, and united them to his father's conquests. His treasury was full,—he was at peace with the whole world, and of his two children, one acted as his deputy at Rouen, the other, his daughter Matilda, was united, though but eight years of age, to Henry the Fifth, emperor of Germany.

Under these circumstances he returned to England, leaving directions for his son to follow in the ship of one Fitz-Stephen, a Norman mariner, whose father had conveyed the Conqueror to the scene of his glory. Henry reached Southampton in safety, where he lingered several days, anxiously awaiting the arrival of his son;—but the feelings of the parent, and the ambition of the sovereign, were alike doomed to suffer prostration: owing to the mad intemperance of the crew, which was eagerly promoted by the prince and his dissipated associates, the vessel struck upon a rock, and all on board, with the exception of a butcher, perished. From that butcher it was afterwards ascertained, that William might have escaped in the boat, had not the cries of his natural sister drawn him back again to the wreck. In an instant the boat was overturned by men who struggled for their lives, and borne down with its helpless burden.

When this sad intelligence was communicated to the

king, he fell senseless to the earth; and though he soon rose, and with an affectation of calmness, which he did not feel, spoke of resigning his will to that of Providence, he was never afterwards seen to smile. New projects, indeed, occupied his attention; for his wife Matilda died, and he contracted a second marriage with a daughter of the duke of Louvain, which, however, proved unfruitful. He then laboured to secure the succession in the line of his daughter Matilda, whom the demise of the emperor had left a widow at the early age of twelve years; and uniting her, with this view, to Geoffrey Plantagenet, the eldest son of the earl of Anjou, caused his great barons and bishops to swear that they would maintain her rights against any enemy. Nevertheless, so long as William of Normandy survived, (and he had recently been advanced by Louis to the dignity of earl of Flanders,) the apprehensions of this anxious monarch suffered no abatement.

That, however, which a thousand intrigues had failed to effect, an accident brought about. William, after narrowly escaping the dagger of an assassin, received his death-wound under the walls of Alost, where he had just defeated a rival set up by Henry to dispute with him the possession of his dominions. Now, then, at last, the king of England began to receive comfort, though the fate of the young prince appears never to have been forgotten. His daughter had borne three sons, to the eldest of whom the name of Henry was given; and to him, as well as to his mother, the king caused his barons to swear fealty, in a great council held at Oxford. But Henry did not long live to enjoy the state of comparative quiet which seemed at last to be ensured to him. Having eaten to excess of lampreys, a dish of which he was exceedingly fond, he died at Rouen, on the 1st of December, 1135, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, and thirty-sixth

of a reign so agitated, as to hinder him from spending more than five uneasy summers within his realm of England.

Henry the First is described as possessed of a commanding figure, a handsome countenance, and an extremely engaging manner. He was brave, vigilant, and crafty; and though stained with many vices, more especially in his private character, seems to have been, upon the whole, a wise and prudent prince. He partook, indeed, in the prejudice against the Anglo-Saxons, for which his family had been remarkable, and rarely, if ever, promoted one of them to any office of trust; but he was at once equitable and rigorous in the execution of justice, particularly against murderers, coiners, and such as disturbed the peace of society.



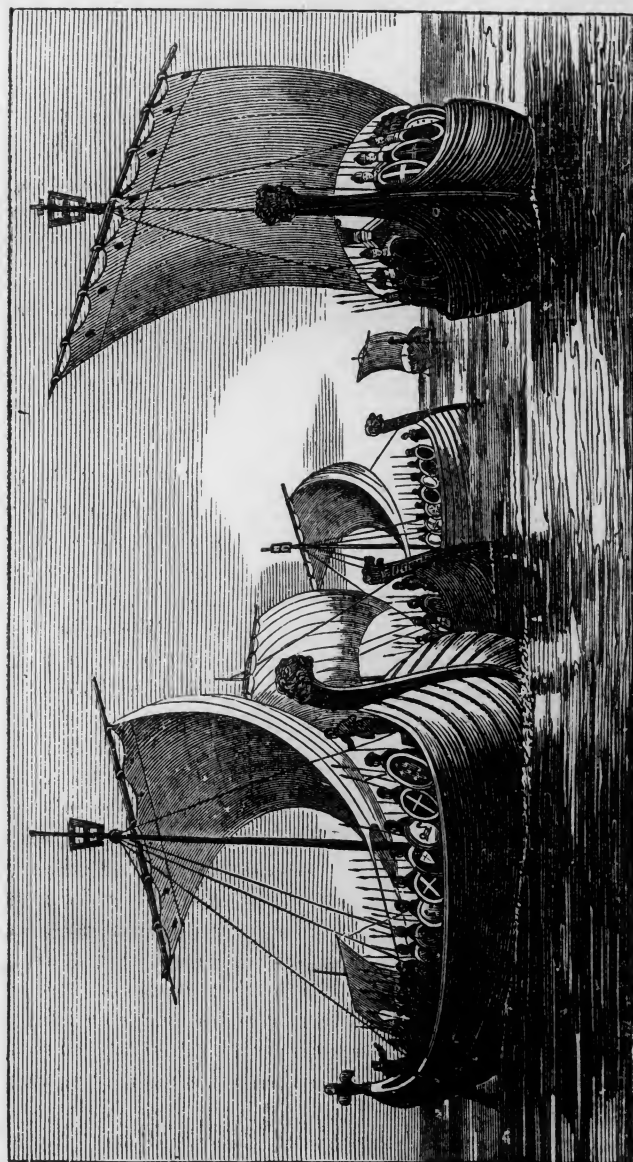
Coin of Henry the First.

Henry was not only himself an accomplished scholar, but a great patron of learning and learned men. In addition to Lanfranc and Anselm, names of no mean reputation, there flourished in Henry's reign Geoffrey of Monmouth, the historian of Britain, and Archbishop Turpin, the ingenious author of the History of Charlemagne and his twelve peers. But Henry, like other princes of the age in which he lived, set at nought the feelings of men of low degree, which he sacrificed without compunction to his own propensities. Immoderately attached to the pleasures of the chase, he exercised great severity upon such as encroached upon the royal forests, punishing the slaughter of a stag as

severely as the murder of a man, and mutilating all the dogs which were kept along the borders of his chase. To him the city of London stands indebted for the charter on which the rights of its corporation are founded; and, unless tradition speaks falsely, the University of Cambridge owes to him the origin of some of its valuable foundations. Nevertheless, his conduct towards his brother evinces a disposition so bad, that it is impossible, in spite of all his various accomplishments, to hold his memory in estimation.



Great Seal of Henry the First.

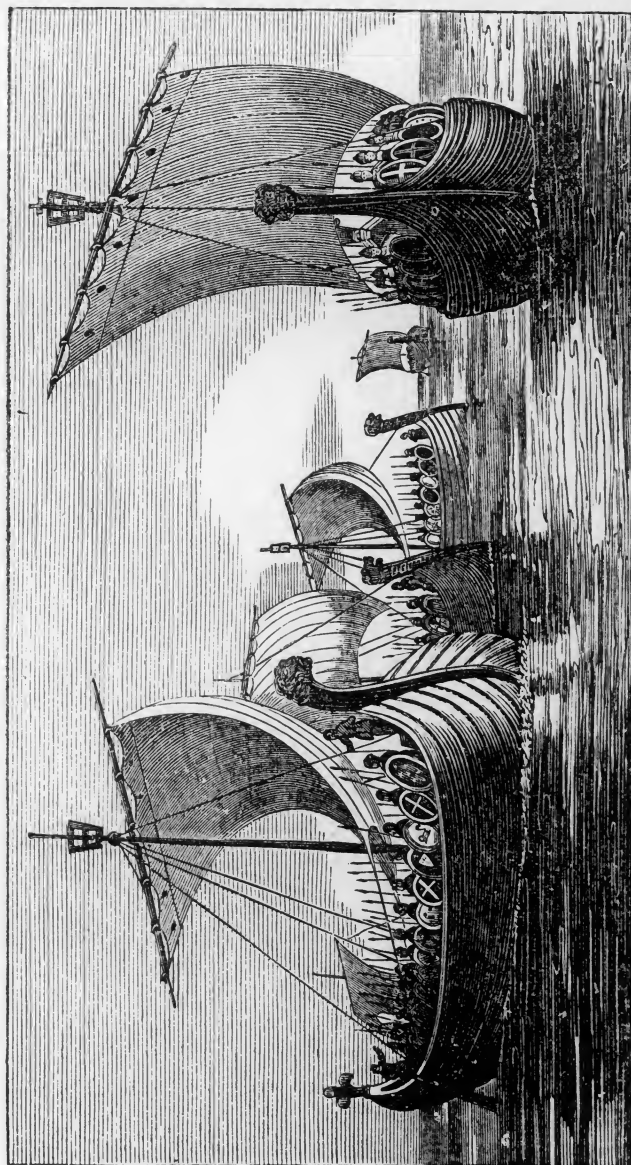


Norman Ships of War of the time of William the Conqueror.

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Great Seal of Henry the First.



Norman Ships of War of the time of William the Conqueror.

CHAPTER VI.

STEPHEN.—HIS TROUBLED REIGN.—IS TAKEN PRISONER.—RELEASED.—MOUNTS THE THRONE AGAIN.—EXPELS MATILDA.—INVADED BY HENRY.—THEIR TREATY.—STEPHEN DIES.—IS SUCCEEDED BY HENRY THE SECOND.—HIS CONTESTS WITH BECKET.—CONQUERS IRELAND.—REBELLION OF HIS SONS.—CAPTURE OF THE KING OF SCOTLAND.—HENRY'S DEATH AND CHARACTER.

[A. D. 1135 to A. D. 1189.]

STEPHEN.

AT the council of barons which was held in Oxford, for the purpose of swearing fealty to Matilda and her infant issue, there were present two chiefs, who contended with one another for the honour of precedence in the performance of this act of vassalage. These were Stephen, earl of Boulogne, the nephew of Henry I, by his sister Adela, whom her father, William the Conqueror, gave in marriage to Stephen, earl of Blois; and Robert, earl of Gloucester, the king's natural son by one of the many mistresses with whom he cohabited. It is not, however, to be imagined, that these two nobles were actuated by any chivalrous feeling in favour of an unprotected woman. They both, on the contrary, regarded her claim as a remote one, and calculated, in spite of the oaths then taken, on its utter failure; while each was anxious to place himself in a position as first prince of the blood, and of course heir, failing Matilda, to the throne. On that occasion Henry decided in favour of Stephen, who first swore to defend the prince; and who no sooner heard of his sister's demise, than he hastened to violate his oath by seizing the crown.

In the accomplishment of this bold usurpation,

Stephen was greatly assisted by his brother Henry, at that time bishop of Winchester, and legate to the Pope. It is even said, that the bishop persuaded Hugh Bigod, comptroller of the household, to perjure himself, by making oath, that in his last moments the late king had disinherited his daughter, and bequeathed the English crown to his nephew Stephen. Partly by the aid of this trick, and partly by being put in possession of the treasure, Stephen prevailed upon many barons and prelates to recognise his title; which was solemnly confirmed by the ceremony of a coronation, on the 22nd of December, 1135. Nor, for a brief space, had the English people any cause to regret that the projects of the usurper were attended with success. He published a charter, in which he abolished many of the most obnoxious of the late king's laws,—particularly such as affected the property of the clergy, and the rights of landowners to hunt over their own domains. In a word, like most monarchs who ascend a throne to which their birth has not entitled them, he endeavoured, by a show of clemency and justice, to conciliate the good-will of his subjects; and like all monarchs who are in earnest, or who are believed to be so, he obtained for awhile the object of his wishes.

Not satisfied with the adoption of these measures, Stephen enrolled bands of mercenary troops from among the multitudes who, at this time, were roaming throughout the various countries of continental Europe. By the aid of these he hoped to secure himself against any revolt of the barons, most of whom, in imitation of the conduct of the clergy, swore to obey the king only so long as he should adhere to his engagements. At the same time they hastened to take advantage of a pledge which he rashly gave, that any man who chose should be permitted to build a castle on his own estate, till the whole kingdom became, ere long, studded with forts, and overrun with a barbarous sol-

diery. Scenes of rapine and disorder speedily followed, which can only be described in the language of one who was an eye-witness:—"In this king's time all was dissension, and evil, and rapine. Against him now rose rich men. They had sworn oaths, but no truth maintained. They were all forsworn, and forgetful of their troth. They built castles, which they held out against him. They cruelly oppressed the wretched men of the land with castle-work. They filled the castles with devils and evil men. They seized those whom they supposed to have any goods, men and labouring women, and threw them into prison for their gold and silver, and inflicted on them unutterable tortures * * *. They burned all the towns;—thou mightest go a day's journey and not find a man sitting in a town, nor an acre of land tilled. Wretched men starved of hunger; to till the ground was to plough the sea."

No great while elapsed ere a spirit of discontent began to arise among many of the nobles, whose atrocities Stephen made an effort to restrain, and whose power he desired to diminish. These opened a communication with Matilda, and, under the able management of Robert, earl of Gloucester, sowed the seeds of a rebellion which, in due time, came to maturity. Meanwhile, David, king of Scotland, took up arms in defence of his niece's claims, and laid waste the northern counties with merciless ferocity. The havoc occasioned by his followers was, indeed, such as to excite the fury of several powerful barons, who would have otherwise joined him, and who forthwith assembled their followers for the purpose of repelling an invasion, which, for whatever object undertaken, proved ruinous to their country. Among them we find the names of Robert de Bruce and Renaud de Baliol, both of whom held estates in England as well as in Scotland; but who, finding the king obstinate, renounced him as their liege lord, and joined their forces to those of the North-

umbrian chiefs. The armies met on the 22nd of August, 1138, in a plain near Northallerton, where, after an obstinate engagement, the Scots suffered a severe defeat, upwards of twelve thousand of their best warriors being killed or taken, and the king, with his eldest son Henry, narrowly escaping the same fate. This great action has ever since been commemorated as the *Battle of the Standard*, in consequence of a lofty crucifix having been erected by the English in a waggon, and carried into the field as a military ensign.

Notwithstanding the defection of Baldwin, earl of Exeter, and the influence which the earl of Gloucester had established in various quarters, Stephen derived from this victory so great an accession of strength, that a little prudence was all that seemed necessary to ensure to him a peaceable continuance in power. Of prudence, however, he seems to have possessed but a slender share; for he began immediately to quarrel with the clergy, whom not even the ties of consanguinity could prevail upon his brother to desert. The consequence was, that the partisans of Matilda became, day by day, more numerous; and it was at last determined by her brother, and principal adviser, to try the chances of an invasion. On the 30th of September, Matilda landed in Sussex, at the head of one hundred and forty knights, and threw herself into Arundel castle,—while Robert, attended by twelve followers only, made his way through the country in disguise, and everywhere raised her standard.

A civil war now began, which, with various alternations of success, spread confusion over the land for the space of two years and a half, but of the details of which it would be as profitless as difficult to give any correct account. Castles were besieged and taken, towns pillaged and consumed by both parties, till at last a decisive battle was fought under the walls of Lincoln, on the 2nd of February, 1141. It proved

eminently disastrous to Stephen, whose army was cut to pieces, and himself delivered as a captive into the hands of his enemies. Matilda sent him in chains to Bristol, while she advanced upon London, where she was received with the loudest acclamations of joy, and immediately crowned. But Matilda, who was not gifted with a greater share of discretion than her rival, excited so much disgust among all classes, that within the short space of six weeks she found it necessary to flee for her life, and sustained soon afterwards a signal defeat near Winchester, where her brother Robert, earl of Gloucester, was made prisoner. The earl was more mercifully dealt with on this occasion than perhaps he had reason to expect, considering the hands into which he had fallen. He was set at liberty in exchange for Stephen, whom the prelates, and many of the nobles, again received as their king, and who renewed the



struggle with fresh ardour, and in some respects with better fortune.

The flames of civil war which were thus rekindled, continued to smoulder rather than to burn, up to the close of 1146. In that year, the queen's cause suffered a severe blow by the death of Robert; and the queen herself, hopeless of success, withdrew in the year following into Normandy. Yet Stephen, on whom experience would appear to have been wasted, contrived, by renewed attacks on the clergy, to render himself odious at home; while Henry, the son of his rival, now grown to man's estate, was enlarging his power, and adding to his renown on the continent. The latter prince, after visiting his uncle the King of Scots, and receiving from his hands the honour of knighthood, was, by his mother's consent, established in the government of Normandy, to which, on the decease of his father Geoffrey, in the subsequent year, he added Anjou and Maine. But that which, more than any other arrangement, established his claim to be regarded as a powerful monarch, was his marriage with Eleanor of Poitou, the repudiated wife of Louis the Seventh, and the mistress, in her own right, of the fair duchy of Aquitaine. With the power of all these provinces to support him, it is not to be wondered at, if he became an object of great alarm to Stephen; whose son the archbishop of Canterbury had refused to anoint to the succession, though compelled to seek, in consequence, an asylum beyond sea. Nor were Stephen's fears groundless. Henry, well aware of the state of public feeling in England, carried over an army into that country, and being joined by numerous adherents, obtained some advantages over Stephen's troops in a skirmish near Malmesbury. But the death of Eustace, which occurred at this juncture, produced such an effect upon Stephen's mind, that he accepted of the mediatorial offices of the archbishop and of the

bishop of Winchester. By the management of these prelates, a treaty was concluded, which secured to Stephen, for the term of his natural life, the peaceable possession of the throne, and recognising in Henry the right of succession, made over to Stephen's son, William, his hereditary earldom of Boulogne, and other ample estates and dignities within the kingdom of England.

To this arrangement the barons signified their assent, by taking the oath of prospective allegiance to Henry, who returned soon afterwards to his duchy of Normandy, carrying with him the respect and esteem of the English. He was not long kept out of his reversional monarchy; for on the 25th of October, 1154, Stephen died after a stormy, and a worse than unprofitable reign, of nineteen years' duration.

HENRY THE SECOND.

HENRY THE SECOND, first monarch of the house of Plantagenet, was engaged in besieging the castle of one of his mutinous Norman barons, when intelligence of the death of Stephen reached him. Secure in the justice of his cause, and resting not incautiously on the good-will of the people, he did not abandon his enterprise, but continued to push his approaches till the castle fell, and then set out for England. He was received with unbounded enthusiasm, and gave to his subjects, by the tenour of his early proceedings, reason to expect that their joy would not be converted into sadness. It was stated some time ago, that Stephen, in order to maintain his disputed authority, had taken into his pay numerous bands of foreigners, chiefly Flemings, who, under the denomination of Reytters, or Ruiters, lived, wherever they went, at free quarters, and committed upon the peaceable inhabitants the most disgraceful outrages. Actuated at the same time by a desire to secure partisans, Stephen had permitted such of the barons as avowed an adhesion to his cause, to erect castellated mansions, under the pretext of fortifying themselves against the attacks of their enemies, but in reality, to ensure an immunity in the perpetration of plunder. Henry no sooner mounted the throne, than he dismissed his predecessor's mercenaries, and took measures to wrest from the nobles their much abused strong-holds. He succeeded in this bold enterprise with less difficulty than might have been anticipated; he called in the debased coin which Stephen had put into circulation; he resumed many of the improvident benefactions which had been made both to monasteries and individuals, and, by adding to the privileges of the royal boroughs, laid the foundation of that system of popular representation, which has grown up to be

the grand palladium of public liberty throughout the empire.

Like all other princes who derived their descent from the Conqueror, Henry spent a large portion of his time on the continent, where, indeed, his influence was very great, and his presence continually demanded. Master, in the right of his father, of Anjou, Touraine, and Maine, deriving from his mother the extensive duchy of Normandy, and receiving as his wife's dower, the counties of Guienne, Poictou, Xaintonge, Auvergne, Perigord, Angoumois, and the Limousin, Henry, though in the language of the day, a feudatory of the French crown, possessed a degree of influence in France, not less potent than that of the monarch to whom he owed allegiance. It is not to be wondered at, if, under such circumstances, Louis the Seventh should have entertained a violent jealousy of his vassal, or that finding him set up a new claim to the earldom of Nantes and Toulouse, he should have resisted him to the utmost of his power. Nevertheless, the former of these dignities was secured without bloodshed, by the skilful diplomacy of one who was destined, a few years afterwards, to appear in a widely different character; while for the attainment of the latter, a way appeared to be paved by the adjustment of a contract of marriage between the infant children of the rival monarchs. Before taking any notice of the consequences which followed this engagement, it will be necessary to say a few words, touching the remarkable man by whom it was proposed, and, to a certain extent, carried through.

Thomas Becket, the son of Gilbert Becket, a pains-taking trader of the city of London, received the rudiments of his education under the canons of Merton, and afterwards pursued his studies in the schools of the metropolis, of Paris, and of Oxford. There is a romantic legend, relative to the circumstances attending

his birth, which, whether it be true or false, seems to demand repetition. The chronicles of his times relate, that his father, Gilbert, in the prosecution of his calling, followed the English army to Palestine, where, with a single servant, named Richard, he fell into the hands of the infidels, and became the slave of a rich Mussulman. The Mussulman had a daughter, who was permitted to converse freely with the captive, and, as a matter of course, conceived an affection for him, which she displayed by furnishing him with the means of escape, under the assurance that she would be the companion of his flight. But Gilbert, by what causes controlled does not appear, found it impossible to carry the lady with him; and flying alone returned in safety to London. Meanwhile, the faithful girl, eluding the vigilance of her father, fled also, and though entirely ignorant of the English language, made her way, by a frequent repetition of the word London, to the capital of the English monarchy. Here, again, she was as much at a loss as ever; for, in addition to the word London, her vocabulary retained only the name of her lover, which, however, she continued to pronounce, till public curiosity became excited. Gilbert himself was in due time made aware of the circumstance. It would have been contrary to the manners of those romantic times had he failed to unravel the mystery. He hastened to his mistress, was joyfully recognised by her, and immediately made her his wife.

The fruit of this union was Thomas, whom, as soon as he attained to a proper age, Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, received into his family. To a handsome person and an agreeable address, Thomas Becket added talents of the highest order, and an insatiable thirst for knowledge. He became, in consequence, a great favourite with his patron, who, after raising him to the dignity of provost of Beverley, and presenting

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him to prebends in the churches of Lincoln and St. Paul's, conferred upon him, as soon as it fell vacant, the archdeaconry of Canterbury. This was followed by an introduction to the king, who, not less than the archbishop, was delighted with his erudition and address, and appointed him, in succession, chancellor of the kingdom, tutor to the prince, warden of the Tower of London, and lord of Berkhamstead Castle, and the honour of Eye. From that time forth, Becket lived on the most familiar and friendly footing with his royal master; not a few of whose wise proceedings, at the commencement of his reign, are attributed, by the monkish writers, to the counsels of his chancellor.

One of the most important services which Becket had an opportunity to perform, was the arrangement of the contract alluded to in a former paragraph, by which Margaret, the eldest daughter of Louis, became affianced, in her infancy, to Henry, the eldest son of the king of England, then a child of three years old. That Henry expected to secure, by this marriage, the succession of his son to the throne of France is quite certain, for Louis had no male issue, and the Salic law, which prohibits females from inheriting crowns, was in those days, either unknown or disregarded. But it soon appeared, that whatever the remote effects of this union might be, the jarring interests which held the two princes asunder, were not to be immediately cancelled. The death of Queen Eleanor's father, who had mortgaged his duchy of Toulouse, to Raymond, earl of St. Gilles, led Henry, in right of his wife, to lay claim to it, and Raymond, resisting the claim, found a willing supporter in his liege lord, the king of France. Henry made haste to assemble an army, in which, by the advice of Becket, he dispensed with the personal attendance of his barons and their retainers, and accepted, in lieu of it, a scutage or pecuniary composition, calculated at the rate of three pounds in

England, and on the continent of forty shillings, on each knight's fee. With the money thus obtained, he armed 20,000 mercenary soldiers, and conducted the war with great vigour, his chancellor following him to the field, and setting an example, on all occasions, of impetuous courage and cool intrepidity.

An act of forbearance on Henry's part, which alone secured Louis from captivity within the walls of Toulouse, induced that prince to desire a conference, to which Henry readily agreed. But the good understanding which followed, received, ere long, a fresh interruption, by the union of Louis, on the demise of his queen, Constantia, with the daughter of the Earl of Blois, the deadly enemy of the house of Plantagenet. Henry became suspicious that the influence of his rival would be exerted to break off the contract into which the young people had entered; he therefore got the infant princess into his power, and commanding the marriage ceremony to be performed, possessed himself of the castles which had been promised as her dower. An immediate rupture with Louis was the consequence; but before much blood had been spilt, the interference of Pope Alexander the Third, whom both monarchs acknowledged in preference to his rival, Octavius, brought about the appearance, at least, of a second reconciliation*.

The conclusion of this petty war, for it deserves no more sounding appellation, left Henry, to all appearance, one of the most puissant monarchs in Europe. Discordant as the materials were which composed his

* The young reader may be informed, that at this time there were two candidates for the papal throne, Alexander, for whom twenty-three cardinals had voted, and whom the kings of England and France acknowledged; and Octavius, who had received the suffrages of only three cardinals, and relied mainly on the support of the Emperor Frederic Barossa.

foreign dominions, he contrived by the vigour of his administration, and in some degree by the terror of his name, to preserve them in tranquillity. At home, again, his authority was all but absolute; for the Welsh princes, after an abortive effort at resistance, consented to become his tributaries; and of his lay barons, there was not one whom he failed to reduce to a state of complete dependence. Still there was a power within the realm, of which he could not but dread the growth, and with which he had, hitherto, been restrained from coming into collision, rather by the influence of private feeling, than by any sense of public duty or personal hazard. The limits of this history will not admit of a sketch, however meagre, of the measures pursued by the clergy of the Church of Rome, to render their authority every where independent, and eventually superior to that of the civil magistrate. In England, as has been shown, the struggle began in the days of St. Dunstan; and continued ever after to be prosecuted, on both sides, with unabating perseverance. Under the second sovereign of the Norman line, the clergy succeeded in effecting the establishment of ecclesiastical courts, before which alone they consented to be tried, and in which members of their own body presided. This arrangement, accompanied as it was by the abandonment of the right of investiture by the sovereign, threw almost all authority over ecclesiastical persons and property, into the hands of the pope; and encouraged his agents to pursue their encroachments still further, for which ample opportunities were not wanting. The necessity of manifesting the depth of a sinner's repentance, by the performance of some act of open penance, was a doctrine of long standing; and, when not abused, productive of the best effects. The clergy now ventured to commute all penances for pecuniary donations, and raised from the sins of the people a prodigious revenue. This was followed by

fresh arrangements, each of them more than another favourable to the independence of the ecclesiastical power. Not civil cases only, but criminal, in which clerks might chance to be parties, were now carried for decision into the bishops' courts, where the heaviest punishment awarded amounted only to deposition, and the more common penalties implied no more than censure. In a word, matters were gradually driven to a point, whence retrogression by either party seemed impracticable, except by a total abandonment of all the principles for which it had previously contended.

Henry the Second was attached to Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, by strong ties of personal friendship. The latter had refused, at a critical moment, to place the crown of England on the head of Stephen's son Eustace; a service which Henry rated as it deserved, and never afterwards forgot. Though, therefore, he viewed the encroachments of the clergy with distaste, he abstained, during Theobald's primacy, from opposing them; being influenced by the entreaties of that prelate, and disinclined to offend him. It was, however, his fixed determination to bring matters back, sooner or later, to their original state; and the death of Theobald appearing to offer a convenient opportunity, he hastened to seize it. With this view, he made choice of Becket to be Theobald's successor. In every office which he had as yet filled, the chancellor had shown himself an able and a willing promoter of his sovereign's views; and not doubting that he would be equally compliant in his new station, Henry announced to him his intention of conferring upon him the primacy. It is said of Becket, that being at Falaise at the time, and dressed in the gay attire of a courtier, he looked with a smile upon his gaudy mantle, and observed, that he had not much the appearance of an archbishop, and that he

should find it difficult to persuade his brother churchmen to the contrary. "But, sire," continued the chancellor, "if you be serious, I must beg to decline the preferment, because it will be impossible for me to perform the duties of that appointment, and at the same time retain my benefactor's favour." Henry, however, would take no denial, so Becket passed over to England, where, being elected by the unanimous suffrages of the monks of Canterbury, he was ordained priest one day, consecrated as bishop the next, and enthroned with great pomp and ceremony in the metropolitical church of Canterbury.

From the hour of his installation as primate of all England, the whole tenour of Becket's life and conversation underwent a change. The parade and luxury in which he had previously indulged, were laid aside. He became grave in his deportment, abstemious in his diet, plain, almost to coarseness, in his dress,—and extravagant only in the amount of his charities, which were extended far and wide. To maintain the rights of the church, and defend the privileges of the clergy, was now his principal study, and it were unjust to deny, that to it he freely sacrificed all objects of lesser importance. It has been said that Becket, while chancellor, had advised more than one measure by which the revenues of the church might be rendered available to the necessities of the state. He became now a strenuous advocate of principles diametrically the reverse, and on the plea, that property once conceded to the church could never be lawfully withdrawn, he summoned the Earl of Clare to surrender the barony of Tunbridge, which, though it had been in his family ever since the conquest, belonged in the Anglo-Saxon times to the see of Canterbury. This proceeding, as well as the presentation of a priest to a living of which one of the royal tenants was patron, gave great

umbrage to Henry, and induced him to hurry forward a contest, which he was now convinced could not be avoided.

The least defensible of the many privileges set up by the ecclesiastical courts, was that which claimed for them the right of adjudicating in criminal cases. Henry resolved to commence hostilities by an attack upon that,—and the atrocious guilt of a clerk in Worcester-shire, who, after debauching a gentleman's daughter, had murdered her father, furnished him with an excellent opportunity. The king demanded that the criminal should be given up for trial before one of his own judges; Becket pleaded the privileges of the church; and the better to secure the person of the delinquent, caused him to be arrested, and thrown into an episcopal prison. Henry instantly summoned an assembly of all the prelates of England, and put to them the following question: Whether they were willing to submit to the ancient laws and customs of the country? They replied with one consent, that they were willing, *saving their own order*. Irritated by this evasion, the king, besides demanding from the archbishop the surrender of the castles of Eye and Berkhamstead, summoned another great council of the clergy and nobility at Clarendon, to whom he submitted the important point at issue, with the view of determining the exact boundaries of their several jurisdictions.

The assembly at Clarendon seems to have been one of the most considerable of those, which, under the title of the great council of the nation, had met since the Norman conquest. Of the constitution, and even of the extent of the powers of these councils, it is not easy to speak with confidence; but that among the latter was numbered the right of enacting laws for the king's subjects, the proceedings of this particular assembly demonstrate. Sixteen regulations were drawn up by a committee, and passed and approved of by the

meeting at large, of the most important of which the following is the substance. That clergymen, accused of crimes against the laws, should be tried in the civil courts; that laymen should not be tried in the spiritual courts, except by legal and reputable witnesses; that the king should be the final judge in ecclesiastical and spiritual appeals; that the archbishops and bishops should be regarded as barons, and bound, like others of their rank, to contribute to the public burdens; that no ecclesiastical person should quit the kingdom except by license from the king, and that goods forfeited to the king should not be protected in churches and churchyards; that all ecclesiastical dignities should be in the king's hands; and that his ecclesiastical tenants *in capite** should follow the king's customs, and sue and be sued before the king's judges. To these, which were called the *Constitutions of Clarendon*, the bishops were required to affix their signatures, and all, including Becket himself, who made no secret of his chagrin, obeyed the command.

Had the papal throne been filled at this time by a man of less firmness than Alexander, or had there existed any cordiality in the relations between Henry and the king of France, the church would have doubtless been brought under the complete dominion of the state, with what results, whether for good or evil, may, when we look to the utter barbarism of the age, admit of a question. As it was, the pope, though still a fugitive in France, peremptorily refused to sanction the *Constitutions of Clarendon*. There needed only some such assurance, that in resisting them he would not stand alone, to encourage Becket to return into the career of contumacy from which he had with extreme reluctance swerved. He retracted his consent to the Constitutions, redoubled his austerities, and even refused to perform any part of his sacerdotal functions, till he had obtained absolution

* Persons who hold their lands directly from the Crown.

from the pope. Henry's wrath was kindled. He began a series of prosecutions, against which the primate found himself unable to bear up; and from which, neither submission nor remonstrance sufficed to divert the sovereign. At last, Becket, after solemnly performing mass, proceeded to the king's palace, arrayed in his archiepiscopal vestments, and bearing a cross in his hand. Even this availed him nothing; so believing that his life was insecure, he disguised himself as a monk, and fled to Flanders. He was well received by the earl, cordially greeted by the king of France, and obtained a comfortable asylum in the abbey of Pontigny, one of the most magnificent ecclesiastical establishments in Burgundy.

The flight of Becket, and the countenance which he received from Henry's great rivals and hereditary enemies, served for a time to widen the breach. The king of England, besides formally sequestrating the prelate's estates, sent all his relatives and dependants, to the number of four hundred, into banishment; and exacted from them an oath, that they would join their chief, and subsist at his expense. Such an oath the pope readily annulled, while the archbishop proceeded to excommunicate by name all the king's ministers, with the nobles and prelates, particularly the bishops of London and Salisbury, who had shown themselves most forward in the king's service. No sooner was Henry made aware of this, than he arrested the payment of Peter's pence, forbade, under heavy penalties, all appeals to the pope and to the archbishop, and denounced the punishment of death against any one who should bring over, from either of them, an interdict against the kingdom. This was a bold proceeding; it amounted, in point of fact, to a change in the established religion of the country; a measure for which the minds of men were not yet ripe; and Henry, in consequence, soon began to discover that his authority was shaken to

its base. He accordingly gave evidence of seeking a reconciliation, which the adverse party was too prudent to decline. After repeated evasions on both sides, the archbishop was reinstated in the domains belonging to his see, under a pledge, that the sentence issued against the courtier bishops and statesmen would be revoked; and that he would continue to exercise his rights under the same restrictions to which his predecessors were liable.

The return of Becket to the see of Canterbury resembled more the triumphal procession of a conqueror, than the journey of a Christian bishop from a place of exile to his home. Crowds of people of all ranks and degrees attended him, and he was welcomed back with a degree of adulation of which it would be difficult to form an adequate conception. He beheld in this only an inducement to go forward in the career of ecclesiastical ambition on which he had entered. During his absence on the continent, the archbishop of York had crowned the king's eldest son Henry. Him the primate placed, without delay, under the ban of excommunication, which he extended to the bishops of London and Salisbury, and to all the most obnoxious among his personal enemies. The degraded prelates hastened to Normandy, where the king chanced to be at the moment, and, not without cause, uttered heavy complaints against the arrogance and treachery of the primate. Henry was deeply affected. "To what a miserable state am I reduced," said he, "when I cannot be at rest in my own realm, by reason of only one priest; there is no one to deliver me out of my troubles." Rash words these, and rashly were they interpreted. William de Tracey, Hugh de Mireville, Richard Britto, and Reginald Fitzurse, four knights of distinguished degree, by whom they chanced to be overheard, instantly quitted the court, and made no halt till they reached Canterbury, where the archbishop had established his residence. They hurried to his house,

required him, in no measured language, to withdraw his sentence, and to take the fealty-oaths to his liege lord the king; and on his refusing to comply, retired, with open threats, that he should ere long have cause to repent his obstinacy. That day they rushed upon him while preparing to celebrate vespers in the cathedral,—a duty from which neither the entreaties of the monks, nor his own sense of impending danger, could hold him back. "Where is the traitor?" shouted Tracey, "where is the archbishop?" "I am here," replied Becket, who stood before the altar of St. Benedict, "no traitor, but the archbishop." "Come hither," rejoined the fiery knight, while he seized him by the sleeve, "thou art a prisoner." Becket's cheeks flushed, as, turning a deaf ear to such as advised flight, he withdrew his arm with a force which caused Tracey to stagger. "What meaneth this, William," said he firmly, "I have done thee many pleasures; and comest thou with armed men into my church?" "Thou canst not live any longer," cried Fitzurse. "Be it so," was the answer of the fearless prelate; "I am ready now, or at any other time, to die for my God, in defence of the liberties of the church." As he uttered these words, the archbishop seized Tracey by the surcoat, and threw him back with such violence as to bring him almost to the ground. It was the act of a moment, and in a moment it was terribly requited. The assassins closed upon him, and while he bent his head in prayer, they cut him down with many blows, and scattered his brains in savage triumph upon the pavement.

Great and universal was the consternation produced by the report of this murder, but upon no one did it produce a more powerful effect than upon Henry. He shut himself up in his chamber three whole days, during which he neither ate nor drank, nor had the smallest communication with his counsellors. At the end of

that period he came forth, and despatched an embassy to the pope, who refused at first to hold with the individuals composing it, any communication; and consented to restrict his censures to the actual perpetrators of the crime, only on the understanding, that the king would submit to any penance which might be imposed on him by legates appointed to inquire especially into the case. The king undertook, moreover, to pardon the companions of the archbishop, to restore to the see of Canterbury all its ancient possessions, to take up arms within three years in defence of the Holy Land, and to abandon all the customs which could be shown to have originated in his days. Nevertheless, he was too politic to meet the legates in person, or to be seen by his subjects in the attitude of a criminal under trial. He passed over to England, and embarked immediately on an enterprise, of little moment at the time, but in the highest degree important, because of the results which have accrued from it.

In the course of this history allusion has more than once been made to the state of Ireland, both as respects the primitive origin of its inhabitants, and the degree of intercourse which they maintained with the neighbouring island of Great Britain. It has been shown that the Irish, like the Britons, were of Celtic descent; and that at the period of the Roman invasion they were not less barbarous than other Celts, we have the best reason to conclude. Civilization, indeed, appears to have made considerable progress in England before it began to show itself in Ireland, where institutions, probably common in earlier times to both countries, continued to exist long after they had ceased to hold good elsewhere. It is a remarkable fact, however, that literature, though introduced so lately as the fifth century, made, for a time, a chief home for itself in that island. We have seen that to Irish scholars, and Irish ecclesi-

astics, several of the Anglo-Saxon kings of England were indebted for the means of conveying instruction to their own subjects; and there are a thousand proofs besides, to which it is not necessary in this place to advert, that during three centuries, both literature and religion were more zealously cultivated in Ireland than in any other country of Europe.

The arrival of the Northmen occasioned here, as it did elsewhere, a total interruption to all the arts of civilized life. Traversing the island from shore to shore, and carrying fire and sword wherever they went, they compelled the natives to seek a rude shelter among the forests and morasses,—where all other cares were gradually merged in those of providing for the daily subsistence of themselves and their families. A second barbarism necessarily arose, scarcely less repulsive than that which had of old overspread the land,—when every petty chief assumed the privileges of royalty, and extended his authority over those among his neighbours, whom he found himself in a condition to subdue. It is true, that the people asserted the right of electing their own chiefs, whom they chose for the most part, though neither invariably, nor as a matter of justice, from the family of the reigning prince; but the question itself was far more frequently decided by the swords of the claimants, than by the opinion of the states in council assembled. This, together with the law of gavelkind,—which, dividing a man's inheritance equally among his sons, must, in the course of a few generations, fritter away into shreds the largest imaginable estates,—kept the Irish in a state of constant excitement and fluctuation, hindered the princes from applying any share of their energies to improve the condition of their subjects, and caused the subjects to become, year by year, less capable of improvement. In the eleventh century, by far the least rude among the natives of Ireland were the descendants of the Danes and

Norwegians, who had established themselves in towns and villages by the sea-shore.

Both William the Conqueror, and Henry the First, appear to have meditated the subjection of Ireland, though circumstances hindered them equally from carrying their design into execution. That was reserved for the second Henry, who obtained from Pope Adrian the Third, a grant of the possessions of a people who professed, indeed, the Christian faith, but were by him summarily treated as infidels, because their clergy owed no obedience to the mandates of the see of Rome. Some time prior to the date of Henry's accession, a series of quarrels among the petty chieftains of Ireland had ended in the partition of the island into five considerable principalities. These were Leinster, Meath, Munster, Ulster, and Connaught; among the sovereigns of which there was always one, who maintained over his fellows the same species of superiority which the Bretwalda was accustomed to exercise over the Saxon monarchs of England. It chanced that one of these, Dermot M'Murrough, king of Leinster, carried off the wife of O'Ruarc, the king of Meath. Application was promptly made to Turlogh O'Connor, then chief among the princes, and the forces of Connaught being joined to those of Meath, the ravisher was overthrown, and driven into exile. He hastened to Guienne, where Henry chanced to be;—made an offer of holding his crown as a vassal of the English monarch, and received, in return, letters patent, empowering him to employ in his service such of Henry's subjects as might be disposed to engage. There were, at this time, three barons residing in the vicinity of Bristol, all of them ruined in fortune, and seriously damaged in reputation, namely, Richard de Clare, surnamed Strongbow, earl of Pembroke, and the brothers Robert Fitz Stephen and Maurice Fitz Gerald. These agreed to assist king Dermot, on the condition that Strongbow, after

marrying his daughter, should be declared heir to the crown, and that to the other two, ample possessions should be awarded out of the territories which they undertook to conquer. In the spring of 1169, they accordingly landed, at the head of a handful of knights, and in the course of a few months restored Dermot to all of which his enemies had deprived him. The ambition of the Irish prince was now roused; he aimed at nothing less than the conquest of the whole island, and he had well-nigh succeeded, through the superior arms and address of his allies, when death cut short his career. Strongbow instantly mounted the throne, and exercised, for a brief space, the authority of king of Ireland.

To defeat the natives wherever he met them in the field, to reduce their towns, and to maintain them when reduced, all these were to Strongbow operations of trifling difficulty. He and his followers, clad in coats of mail, fought against brave but naked savages, and victory invariably inclined to the side of discipline, and so marked a superiority in the means of aggression. But when Henry, who had at first despised the exploits of his subjects, began to exhibit symptoms of jealousy, Strongbow saw that it was time for him to act an humbler part. He laid the ensigns of royalty at his master's feet, and surrendering Dublin, with all the castles and harbours in his possession, offered to hold the rest of Ireland as a tenant in chief of the English crown. Henry was satisfied; and, glad of the opportunity which such an enterprise offered, of diverting the minds of the people from the late catastrophe, he gathered together a body of troops, with which he embarked at Milford Haven, on board of a fleet of five hundred sail, and on the 17th of October, 1171, landed at Waterford.

The conquests achieved by Henry in person, were neither extensive nor important. The spirit of the

Irish was indeed broken, and four out of the five principalities gave in a nominal submission. But beyond the limits of a few sea-port towns, and of the garrisons which he established at various points, his authority can scarcely be said to have been recognised. He found the island, moreover, so thoroughly barbarous, that only the more desperate among the Welsh and Norman nobles could be induced to settle there; and as these went over rather for purposes of plunder than to seek a permanent residence, no benefit accrued from their presence. Henry was recalled from Dublin early in the spring of 1172. He left his new lordship apparently in quiet, under the management of Earl Richard, who was succeeded, a few years later, by a distinguished knight, Hugh de Lacey; but he left also the seeds of discontent everywhere sown. These came gradually to perfection, and a warfare began, which, lasting to the times of Elizabeth and her successor, hindered Ireland from adding, in any solid degree, to the strength or importance of England.

Confident in the accession of popularity which the conquest of Ireland had secured to him, Henry no longer hesitated to meet the Pope's legates, who were soon taught to feel that the moment had passed away when it would be wise to push the pretensions of the Holy See to an extreme. A reconciliation accordingly took place, on terms the reverse of disadvantageous to the king, who, though he permitted the *Constitutions of Clarendon* to fall into the shade, laid claim to all the prerogatives which had been enjoyed by the most powerful of his predecessors. This was all that seemed wanting, in order to place him on the pinnacle of human prosperity: nevertheless, there existed, within the bosom of his own family, ample sources of uneasiness, which it required but the operation of a few trivial causes to bring into play.

Henry's offspring was numerous. He had four sons,

Henry, Richard, Geoffrey, and John, to each of whom he designed to bequeath a portion of his empire. He appointed the first to be his successor in the kingdom of England, in the duchy of Normandy, and in the counties of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine; the second was invested with Guienne and Poictou; the third, in right of his wife, inherited Brittany; while the new conquest of Ireland was destined to form an appanage for the fourth. The better to insure the fulfilment of these dispositions, he caused Henry to be crowned in his own lifetime; and, though at first averse to the measure, permitted, in the end, his consort Margaret to be associated with him in the ceremony. So great a display of power on the part of the English monarch, gave to the neighbouring princes excessive umbrage. They set themselves to the task of devising measures for its dismemberment; and they found in the king's sons, already influenced by the intrigues of their mother, ready instruments of mischief. That wretched woman, of whose early profligacies some notice has been taken, became, in her latter years, a slave to jealousy; and for the purpose of avenging the wrongs which she believed herself to suffer, stirred up her own children to rebel against her husband. Henry, on the refusal of the king to divide with him his authority, fled to the court of France: he was followed, soon afterwards, by Richard and Geoffrey; and the whole, supported by Louis, by the earl of Flanders, and the king of Scotland, raised the standard of revolt, and waged war against their father.

Henry's government had been severe, and the knowledge that it was also equitable, sufficed not to reconcile to it a fierce and dissolute nobility. Multitudes of the barons, both in England and elsewhere, joined the ranks of the insurgents, who ravaged Gascony, threw Brittany into confusion, and devastated the richest counties in the south of England. At the same time the French

and the Flemings poured into Normandy, where they reduced several places of strength; while William the Lion, king of Scotland, broke over the border, and carried fire and sword through Northumberland. It is said by the monkish writers, that Henry saw, in those dangers which threatened him, the finger of God; and that, in order to appease that Heaven which he had so grievously offended, he resolved on doing penance at the tomb of Becket. Whether such were really his feelings, or whether he desired only to conciliate the clergy, and through them to secure the good-will of the people, the result was the same. He made a humiliating pilgrimage to the church of Canterbury, submitted his naked shoulders to the lash of the monks, and, having obtained plenary absolution, departed full of hopes, which were not destined to be overthrown. On all sides his arms triumphed. The king of Scotland, having rashly separated from his army, was, with a hundred knights, surprised and taken prisoner by Ralph de Glanville. The mutinous barons, both at home and abroad, were defeated; Henry himself compelled the French and Flemings to raise the siege of Rouen, and his sons were reduced to the necessity of craving a pardon, which was freely granted. On the 28th of September, 1174, a pacification was concluded at Falaise, and the rebel princes, besides securing a general amnesty for their adherents, were reinstated in the honours and dignities which they formerly held. Two of the king's enemies, and only two, were treated with harshness, while from William of Scotland was exacted, as the price of his liberation, an acknowledgment of vassalage, together with the surrender of the castles of Edinburgh, Stirling, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Jedburgh.

Almost for the first time, since his accession to the throne, Henry now found himself at peace with all the world, and at leisure to follow up certain judicial

reforms which he had long meditated. He divided England into six circuits, not very dissimilar to those which prevail at the present time, and causing itinerant judges to pass through them at stated periods, brought home justice, as it were, to every man's door. He modified, though he did not venture to abolish, the laws of ordeal, and paved the way for the general adoption of juries, by permitting an appeal from the wager of battle to the decisions of the grand assize. He passed a law which prohibited the goods of the vassal from being seized for the debts of the lord; and ordered that the vassal's rents should be paid, not to the bankrupt lord himself, but to his creditors. The pecuniary commutation for crimes, which had begun to fall gradually into disrepute, he abolished; and enacted severe penalties against robbery, murder, false coining, and arson. Nevertheless, he continued in full force the iniquitous forest-laws, and was rigorous in the exaction of his dues,—requiring the judges of circuit to investigate narrowly every claim which held out even a remote prospect of bringing in money to the king's exchequer. That his reputation for justice stood high, however, there requires no other proof than is manifested by the readiness with which foreign princes sought, and were guided by his decisions. The rival kings of Spain, Alphonso of Castile and Sanchez of Navarre, chose him for umpire; and both they and their nobles received his award with implicit deference.

From these important labours Henry was suddenly called away, by the alarming intelligence that Jerusalem had been taken by the Saracens, and that a new crusade to recover the holy city was proclaimed. Whether he would have assumed the cross in person, may, perhaps, admit of a doubt; for he was as cautious as well as a brave prince,—but ere measures could be taken to enrol an army, he became involved in new difficulties

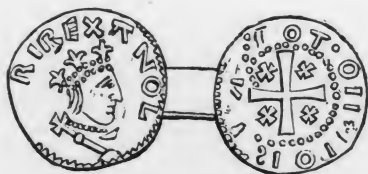
at home. His second son, Richard, a fiery and turbulent youth, refused to do homage to his brother for the duchy of Aquitaine. The brother resented this, and a civil war ensued, which ended, at last, in a general combination of the princes, and the march of their adherents against the king their father. While prosecuting this unnatural contest, Henry, the eldest of the four, was seized with a mortal illness, and died, overwhelmed with remorse. His death dissolved the confederacy; and as it was followed soon after by that of Geoffrey, the hazard of a renewed combination appeared remote. But the case was not so. Philip of France, the son and successor of Louis, contrived to work upon the irritable mind of Richard, and drove him on to another and more serious attack upon the sovereignty of his father. On this occasion fortune declared in favour of the insurgents. Henry was worsted in numerous encounters; castle after castle was wrested from him; and he was compelled, in the end, to accept a pacification on terms dictated by the rebels. Among other conditions, he agreed to grant a general pardon to the nobles who served against him under Richard's banner. The list was shown to him, and he beheld prominent among the names of the rebels, that of his youngest and favourite son John. Henry's heart sank within him. He fell into a raging fever, and after pouring out a malediction upon his children, which he could not be prevailed upon to retract, died at the castle of Chinon, near Nancy, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and thirty-fifth of his reign.

Henry the Second has sometimes been described as not only the most powerful and accomplished prince of his age, but as a man whose character, both in private and in public life, was almost without a blemish. This, however, is too much praise to bestow upon one who was not only conspicuous for several vices,

but who rarely hesitated as to the means which it might be necessary to employ, provided some end, in itself desirable, were sought to be attained. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied to him that he went far to introduce order into all parts of his dominions, by restraining alike the licentiousness of the barons, and the turbulence of the people. When he came to the throne, the country was overspread with castles, from which the retainers of the barons sallied forth, to commit, every where, the most cruel oppressions. These Henry almost entirely demolished, reserving only such as seemed necessary for the defence of the realm, and placing them in the hands of men on whom he believed that he could rely. In like manner it was customary, in London, for bodies of armed men to rush abroad after night-fall, and to plunder and insult the peaceable citizens with impunity. By a vigorous exercise of the law, and one or two severe examples, Henry put a stop to the practice. The right had formerly been claimed by lords of the manor, to confiscate the property of ships wrecked upon their shores; Henry ordained that if one man or one animal were found alive in the wreck, the property should be restored to the owners.

Of the improvements introduced by him into the mode of administering justice, notice has been taken elsewhere; it may be added, that he abolished the impost called Danegelt, commuted the military service of the barons for a scutage, and was the first to levy on the goods of the nobles, equally with those of the commoners, a tax for the service of the state. These innovations, trivial as to us they may appear, indirectly shook the fabric of feudal power, and paved the way for still greater changes in the maxims of government, out of which have arisen public liberty and public happiness.

Henry left behind him two sons, Richard and John; and his wife Eleanor, the firebrand of his family, survived him many years.



Coin of Henry the Second.

CHAPTER VII.

RICHARD THE FIRST.—HIS WARS IN PALESTINE.—HIS CAPTIVITY.—RETURN TO ENGLAND.—WAR WITH FRANCE.—HIS DEATH.—JOHN.—HIS FOLLY AND DUPLICITY.—MURDERS HIS NEPHEW ARTHUR.—LOSES HIS CONTINENTAL DOMINIONS.—QUARRELS WITH THE CHURCH.—ACKNOWLEDGES HIMSELF A VASSAL OF THE POPE.—THE BARONS REBEL.—MAGNA CHARTA.—SECOND CIVIL WAR.—JOHN'S DEATH.

[A.D. 1189 to A.D. 1216.]

OF the numerous children which were born to Henry, one only, an illegitimate son, attended him on his death-bed, and closed his eyes. It is recorded, indeed, of Richard, his successor, that so soon as he heard of his father's illness, he hastened to implore his pardon, and arriving some time after life was extinct, that he rushed into the chamber of the dead. By some natural process, the blood began at this moment to ooze from the mouth and nose of the corpse, which so affected Richard, that he accused himself of being his father's murderer, and remained for awhile inconsolable. By degrees, however, his composure returned; and a crusade having been for some time arranged, he resolved to devote to the recovery of Jerusalem all the means, both pecuniary and warlike, with which Providence had favoured him.

In order to raise money for this great undertaking, Richard not only subjected his own people to heavy exactions, but gave back to the king of Scotland, for the sum of ten thousand marks, the superiority which his father had somewhat unfairly acquired. This was a sorry commencement to his reign, yet it was far from being the only proceeding which gave to his government, even in its infancy, a character for ferocity such

as it scarcely merited. Richard had forbidden any Jew to be present at his coronation, that remarkable people being then regarded with an aversion which partook as much of superstition as of principle. But the genius of a Jew was, in Richard's time, pretty much the same as it is in our own. Fearless and indefatigable in the pursuit of gain, he seldom succumbed under persecution; and one or two, in consequence, succeeded in making their way, loaded with valuable presents, within the prohibited bounds of Westminster Abbey. The king, it is said, spurned with his foot the unfortunate wretches who presumed to kneel before him; and the example was instantly followed by his sycophants and courtiers. A cry arose that the Jews were, by royal edict, given over to the sword; and so faithfully was the impression acted upon, that not in London only, but throughout all England, a general massacre of the ill-fated race was perpetrated. In York alone, upwards of five hundred men perished, after slaughtering their own wives and children, in order to hinder them from falling into the hands of their oppressors.

The avidity with which the barons and other landowners hastened to make a bonfire of their deeds of debt, was of a piece with the rapacious improvidence which marked the king's proceedings, in raising a revenue for the maintenance of his distant war—the offspring rather of personal vanity than of superstition. Besides levying, without mercy, scutages upon all ranks, Richard put up to public auction almost every office under the crown. Even the earldom of Northumberland was disposed of for life to Hugh de Puzas, bishop of Durham; and when his ministers ventured to remonstrate against this and other equally improvident acts, the king declared that he would sell London itself, could he meet with a purchaser. By these means a mighty army was collected, which, joining that of Philip

of France, swelled the total number of crusaders to an amount altogether beyond the reach of ordinary calculation. But there soon sprang up, between two rival princes, abundant grounds of jealousy, which the insolence of the English at Messina, and their loitering to subdue Cyprus, tended in no degree to remove. In the former of these places, deadly umbrage was also given to Leopold, duke of Austria, by the denial to his standard of the same degree of respect which was offered to the flags of England and France; while the refusal of Richard to divide with Philip the spoils of the conquered island, tended greatly to widen a breach, which other and more cutting slights had effected.

In spite of these misunderstandings, and a delay of many months, during which Richard espoused Berengaria, daughter of Sanchez, king of Navarre, the French and English armies arrived in Palestine, in sufficient time to take part in the siege of Acre, which had already been carried on by the Christians for the space of two years. During the passage from Cyprus to Tyre, Richard fell in with an enormous Saracenic vessel. He attacked and took it, after a long and obstinate engagement; and he now brought to the assault of Acre the same indomitable courage which had distinguished him in his exploits elsewhere. Before that place upwards of three hundred thousand Christian soldiers had perished; the forces of Richard and Philip, animated by the example set them by their leaders, compelled it to surrender in a few days. But as if victory, and its accompaniment leisure, were irreconcilable with the state of their feelings, the monarchs no sooner beheld their efforts crowned with success, than they renewed their quarrel. There was, at this time, a rivalry for the barren crown of Jerusalem, between Guy de Lusignan and Conrad, marquess of Montserrat; the former of whom claimed as the relict of Sibylla, the deceased queen, while the latter appeared as the defender of his

wife's rights—the sister, and therefore the natural heir of Sibylla. The simple fact of Philip's espousing the cause of Conrade, led Richard to declare himself the patron of Guy, and the difference between them became at length so serious, that Philip made up his mind to abandon the expedition. He left under Richard's command ten thousand of his best troops, and returned to Europe.

Placed, by the removal of his rival, at the head of affairs in Palestine, Richard became, in many important respects, a new man. He purchased from Guy the relinquishment of his claims on Jerusalem, by presenting him to the less dignified, but more substantial, sovereignty of Cyprus. If he continued to indulge his own impetuous and overbearing temper, he at least repressed all displays of similar moods in others; and aware that an armed body is never so tractable as when engaged in active service, he soon led forth his troops to new conquests. He pushed upon Ascalon; repelled numerous attempts, on the part of Saladin, to break in upon his line of march, defeated an army of 300,000 Saracens with great slaughter, and compelled the town to open its gates. Other places of less note fell in rapid succession; and Jerusalem itself, the great prize for which so much blood had been shed, lay open to attack. But the Christian host was by this time wasted away, through the combined influence of famine, disease, and the sword, while Conrade of Montserrat, the monarch whom they struggled to restore, had fallen beneath the dagger of an assassin. Ardent and fearless as he was, Richard saw that it would be hopeless to pursue the business further. He consented to a suspension of arms for three years, on condition that free access to the Holy Sepulchre should be afforded to all pilgrims, and that the sea-port towns of Palestine, which they had with so much labour reduced, should remain in the hands of the Christians. *(Jaffa, Joppe).*

It was high time for the king of England to think of returning to his own dominions, where the greatest confusion prevailed both at home and abroad. Longchamp, bishop of Ely, to whom he had committed the chief direction of affairs, soon rendered himself so obnoxious to the English nobility, that, taking Prince John as their leader, they refused any longer to submit,—and compelling the regent to escape beyond sea in women's attire, transferred his authority to the archbishop of Rouen. It would have been strange, had the mere impediment of an oath hindered a prince of Philip's temperament from grasping at such an opportunity of weakening the power of a rival; and, in defiance of the vow which he had taken, to defend Richard's realms from molestation, he opened a series of intrigues both with John and the barons, which it required all the ability of Queen Eleanor, more fortunate than her son in escaping the perils of a homeward voyage, even partially to counteract.

While his enemies thus laboured to undermine his authority, and an unnatural brother took his place among them, the chivalrous monarch was undergoing a series of misfortunes, against which it required all his constancy and courage to bear up. The fleet with which he quitted Palestine having been dispersed in a storm, Richard was carried to the French coast near Marseilles; and, justly fearing to put himself in the power of Philip, he gave directions to steer for Corfu. After escaping capture by the Greeks, (equally with the Moslems his enemies,) and defeating a body of pirates who assailed his vessel, he prevailed upon the latter to conduct him to Zara, where he landed under the name of Hugh the Merchant, and sent a costly ring to the governor, with a prayer for a safe conduct. "This is not the gift of a merchant," said the governor, "but of Richard the king, a generous prince, who deserves no interruption. Let him pass on in safety." A like

result ensued, when a Norman knight, by name Roger D'Argenton, was sent out by the governor of another town in search of him. He, too, refused to molest the chief under whom the army of Christ had achieved so much glory; but when he arrived within the limits of Germany, fresh precautions became necessary, in order to elude the vigilance of Leopold, duke of Austria, who sought him with unrelenting hatred. One by one his followers were taken, till he was reduced at last to wander for three days and nights, destitute of food, and attended only by a single squire and a little boy. Hunger drove him to Erperg, near Vienna. He sent the lad to purchase provisions; and the mistaken fastidiousness of the messenger, who refused all but the most costly viands, excited suspicion. The youth was seized, put to the torture, and confessed where his master lay; who the same night was arrested, while asleep, and thrown into a dungeon.

Richard was not long left to the mercy of Leopold,—for the emperor, Henry VI., declaring that a king was no fit prisoner for a duke, demanded and obtained the custody of the captive. By his new gaoler he was treated with more courtesy, though his confinement suffered no abatement; and Richard, being of a free and jovial turn, mixed familiarly with his guards, and drank and sang as if he were in his own palace. He was on a certain occasion chanting one of his favourite Provençal ballads, when he was answered from without the castle-walls by a well-known voice. It was that of his minstrel Blondel,—who, after making himself acquainted with his master's exact situation, hastened back to England, and laboured to accomplish his deliverance. At the earnest entreaty of Queen Eleanor, the Pope interfered, and, after subjecting him to a mock trial for the murder of Conrade, a measure which brought disgrace only on himself and his judges, the emperor was prevailed upon to fix a ransom, on payment

of which his royal captive should be set free. It amounted to not less than one hundred and fifty thousand marks, or three hundred thousand pounds of our money; a prodigious sum in that age, when the precious metals were far more valuable than they are now. Nevertheless, by melting down the church-plate, and levying heavy contributions both on the clergy and the nobles, it was raised, and on the 13th of May, 1194, just eighteen months after his departure from Acre, Richard landed at Sandwich, in the county of Kent, amid the shouts of an overjoyed people.

The first measure of the liberated monarch was to repeat the ceremony of his coronation; after which he began to prepare, on a gigantic scale, for the punishment of Philip and of his faithless brother, now in open arms against him. Troops were soon raised, at the head of which Richard passed over into Normandy. He found both Philip and John prepared to receive him; for the former, so soon as he heard of the king's deliverance, had warned his confederate of his danger, by writing, "Take care of yourself; the devil is broken loose." But the war which ensued was productive of no results commensurate to the amount of preparations that preceded it. John, indeed, a craven as well as a traitor, soon gave in his submission, which was accepted by the generous crusader with something like contempt. "I forgive him," said he to their mother, "and hope I shall as easily forget the wrongs he has done me, as he will forget my pardon." But Philip held out,—sometimes gaining, sometimes losing a battle, and not unfrequently causing an intermission in the contest by an armistice, which almost invariably suffered interruption. Thus it was till the 24th of May, when Richard sat down before Chaluz, the castle of a rebellious baron, where an archer, named Gourdon, shot at him from the battlements, and wounded him with an arrow in the shoulder. The wound was not dangerous,

but being unskilfully treated, a mortification came on, from which the king saw that he could not recover. He had carried the place, and hanged all the garrison except Gourdon; he now sent for him, and demanded what evil he had ever done to him, that he should seek his life. The man answered boldly, "You killed with your own hand my father and my two brothers; you intended to have hanged myself. I am now in your power, and you may do with me what you please; but I will endure the severest torture without repining, provided I can believe myself to have been the instrument of ridding the world of such a nuisance." Richard was struck at the reply, commanded the archer to be set at liberty, and presented him with a sum of money; but the poor fellow derived no benefit from the monarch's softened feelings. Being seized by Morcadée, the leader of Richard's mercenary troops, he was first flayed alive, and then hanged.



Great Seal of Richard the First.

Richard did not long survive this interview. Having bequeathed, by will, the kingdom to his brother John, and distributed a fourth part of his personal property among his servants, he expired, in the forty-second year of his age, after a reign, if such it may be termed, of ten years. He was a brave, but a cruel man, a knight-errant rather than a king,—one who deserved, in every sense, the cognomen which he delighted to assume, "The lion-hearted;" but who has not left behind him the memory of a single act from which he can be said to deserve the gratitude of posterity.

JOHN.

HAD the crown of England been in those days strictly hereditary, in other words, had the ancient Saxon usages, with reference to royal succession, been entirely set aside, the claims of John, even though strengthened by the testamentary disposition of his predecessor, would have been resisted. Geoffrey, the next in point of seniority to Richard, of whose death at the court of France notice has been taken, left behind him two children; a daughter, born during her father's lifetime, and a son, a posthumous child, named Arthur. It was the original intention of Richard, to bequeath his kingdoms to Prince Arthur; indeed, he mentioned him to the nobles, previous to his departure for Palestine, as their future sovereign; but either the extreme youth of the prince, or the intrigues of the queen-mother, caused him to abandon that project, and to give to his brother whatever weight might attach to the will of a deceased monarch. John was, in consequence, proclaimed in Normandy, Aquitaine, Poictou, and England; Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, declaring, in a speech delivered at Northampton, that the supreme authority over the last of these nations had ever been at the disposal of

the people, and that the people elected John to be their sovereign. The adherents of Arthur, however, who was himself only twelve years of age, exhibited no inclination to relinquish his rights. Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, declared in favour of his title, and applying for assistance to the French monarch, found in him a willing, if not a disinterested ally. Philip removed his ward to Paris, where he placed him under the same tutors with his son Louis, and made ready to accomplish his own ends, under the plausible pretext of succouring the feeble and the oppressed.

A war ensued, of which the events were too unimportant to demand in this history a detailed account. It ended, by the interposition of the Pope's legate, very little to the honour of either party; and John, besides surrendering the town of Caux, in Normandy, consented to pay to the French monarch, under the appellation of a relief, the sum of twenty thousand marks. But neither a temporary accommodation, nor the union of Philip's eldest son, Louis, to Blanche of Castile, the niece of the king of England, could efface the recollection of old grievances, or put a curb upon ambitious projects long and steadily contemplated. Philip ceased not to gaze with a longing eye upon the continental dominions of his neighbour, which he needed but a fair pretext to assail, and a moderate continuance of good fortune to secure. Nor did any great while elapse, ere both were afforded.

From what has been already said of John, the reader will have doubtless collected, that there are few vices incident to human nature, of which he was not the slave. Haughty, yet capable of the greatest meanness; arrogant, yet cowardly, cruel, licentious, selfish, and utterly devoid of truth, he soon estranged from him all classes of his subjects; whom, from the highest to the lowest, he oppressed without scruple, and insulted without compunction. Among other atrocious acts, he

repudiated his wife, the heiress of the family of Gloucester, and falling in love with Isabella, the daughter of the count of Angoulême, married her, in spite of the remonstrances of the count de la Marche, to whom she was already betrothed. La Marche, besides appealing to the Pope, began instantly to form a confederacy against him. Philip eagerly, though not avowedly, lent his aid; and Prince Arthur once more taking the field, John found himself involved in a serious struggle for the maintenance of his authority.

The tide of fortune ran strongly against him, till an accident occurred, from which, had he possessed sufficient prudence to use it aright, the most advantageous consequences would have accrued. Prince Arthur, while engaged in the siege of Mirabeau, in Poictou, into which Eleanor, the queen-mother, had thrown herself, was surprised by John's army; and, with the chief of his followers, taken prisoner. He was conveyed first to Falaise, afterwards to Rouen, and there basely assassinated; according to the statements of some historians, by John's order, according to others, by John himself. A deed so black, and in John's circumstances so impolitic, served but to add to the numbers of his domestic enemies; while it afforded to Philip an excuse to interfere in the quarrel. He summoned John, as a peer of France, to take his trial for the murder of a royal ward; and, on receiving an evasive answer, solemnly condemned him to forfeit all the lands which he held by homage of the French crown. The promulgation of the sentence was immediately followed by the march of a great army into Normandy.

Town after town, and castle after castle, submitted; till the patrimony which Rollo had won with his sword, and his descendants had for three centuries maintained, was wrested from hands too feeble, and too much stained with crime, to maintain them. There remained, indeed, at the end of a few years, only the

duchy of Guienne, to keep alive the connexion which once subsisted between England and the continent.

Smarting under the agony of a disgrace, which even he felt to be merited, John fled to England, where he filled the land with exclamations against the treachery and cowardice of his barons. This he followed up by demanding from them heavy contributions in money, under the pretext, that he would exhaust not only his own resources, but those of England itself, rather than sit down under the loss of his continental provinces. But his military operations were as trifling and abortive, as his moral conduct was depraved. He landed at Rochelle, made himself master of Angers, and reduced it to ashes, but fell back again with precipitation, as soon as the approach of Philip was announced to him. At length he consented to a truce for two years, which the mediation of the Pope procured; and gave up all desire, as it appeared, of redeeming his own honour, and that of the nation.

It was at this eventful period, when his private vices, and public imbecility, had forfeited the respect and esteem of his lay subjects, that John, obeying the impulses of a rash spirit, involved himself in a controversy with the Pope. There had existed from old date, a division between the monks of St. Augustine's, at Canterbury, and the bishops of the province, touching the right of electing to the metropolitan see, whenever it might become vacant. The death of Hubert, which occurred in 1205, presented a temptation to renew the struggle, which neither party possessed courage sufficient to resist. A party of monks met, without waiting for the royal commission, and elevated to the dignity of primate, Reginald, sub-prior of the convent, whom, after binding him to secrecy, they despatched the same night, to obtain his confirmation from the hands of Pope Innocent the Third. The vanity of Reginald, however, overpowering his pru-

dence, induced him to represent himself everywhere as the archbishop elect, a matter which was immediately communicated to the king of England, and, of course, highly resented. John commanded the suffragan bishops to meet, recommended to them John de Grey, bishop of Norwich, and approving their choice, invested him, without delay, with the insignia of office. But the breathless haste of the king was to the full as distasteful at Rome, as the more crafty proceedings of the monks of St. Augustine's, and the weakness of the sub-prior. The Pope refused to confirm either personage; and causing the forms of a new election to be gone through, by the members of the deputations which had waited upon him, he conferred upon Stephen Langton, chancellor of the University of Paris, but an Englishman, and an accomplished scholar, the primacy of his native land. John received the announcement of this transaction with the utmost impatience. He swore by *God's teeth*, that Langton should never set foot within his realm, as archbishop, and sending two knights of his train to Canterbury, expelled the monks from St. Augustine's, and took possession of their property.

A bitter quarrel immediately ensued between the king of England and the Pope. The former, in defiance of his bishops, persisted in rejecting the primate thus forced upon him; the latter, seeing that exhortation and remonstrance availed nothing, laid England under an interdict. By virtue of this deed, the clergy caused the churches to be everywhere shut up. The sacrament of baptism was the only religious rite which they could be prevailed upon to perform; the marriage-ceremony was refused; the dead were deprived of Christian burial, the sound of the bell was heard no more, and the statues of the saints were thrown to the ground. Still John continued obstinate; upon which, the Pope, after a delay of two whole years,

duchy of Guienne, to keep alive the connexion which once subsisted between England and the continent.

Smarting under the agony of a disgrace, which even he felt to be merited, John fled to England, where he filled the land with exclamations against the treachery and cowardice of his barons. This he followed up by demanding from them heavy contributions in money, under the pretext, that he would exhaust not only his own resources, but those of England itself, rather than sit down under the loss of his continental provinces. But his military operations were as trifling and abortive, as his moral conduct was depraved. He landed at Rochelle, made himself master of Angers, and reduced it to ashes, but fell back again with precipitation, as soon as the approach of Philip was announced to him. At length he consented to a truce for two years, which the mediation of the Pope procured; and gave up all desire, as it appeared, of redeeming his own honour, and that of the nation.

It was at this eventful period, when his private vices, and public imbecility, had forfeited the respect and esteem of his lay subjects, that John, obeying the impulses of a rash spirit, involved himself in a controversy with the Pope. There had existed from old date, a division between the monks of St. Augustine's, at Canterbury, and the bishops of the province, touching the right of electing to the metropolitan see, whenever it might become vacant. The death of Hubert, which occurred in 1205, presented a temptation to renew the struggle, which neither party possessed courage sufficient to resist. A party of monks met, without waiting for the royal commission, and elevated to the dignity of primate, Reginald, sub-prior of the convent, whom, after binding him to secrecy, they despatched the same night, to obtain his confirmation from the hands of Pope Innocent the Third. The vanity of Reginald, however, overpowering his pru-

dence, induced him to represent himself everywhere as the archbishop elect, a matter which was immediately communicated to the king of England, and, of course, highly resented. John commanded the suffragan bishops to meet, recommended to them John de Grey, bishop of Norwich, and approving their choice, invested him, without delay, with the insignia of office. But the breathless haste of the king was to the full as distasteful at Rome, as the more crafty proceedings of the monks of St. Augustine's, and the weakness of the sub-prior. The Pope refused to confirm either personage; and causing the forms of a new election to be gone through, by the members of the deputations which had waited upon him, he conferred upon Stephen Langton, chancellor of the University of Paris, but an Englishman, and an accomplished scholar, the primacy of his native land. John received the announcement of this transaction with the utmost impatience. He swore by *God's teeth*, that Langton should never set foot within his realm, as archbishop, and sending two knights of his train to Canterbury, expelled the monks from St. Augustine's, and took possession of their property.

A bitter quarrel immediately ensued between the king of England and the Pope. The former, in defiance of his bishops, persisted in rejecting the primate thus forced upon him; the latter, seeing that expostulation and remonstrance availed nothing, laid England under an interdict. By virtue of this deed, the clergy caused the churches to be everywhere shut up. The sacrament of baptism was the only religious rite which they could be prevailed upon to perform; the marriage-ceremony was refused; the dead were deprived of Christian burial, the sound of the bell was heard no more, and the statues of the saints were thrown to the ground. Still John continued obstinate; upon which, the Pope, after a delay of two whole years,

proceeded to pronounce against him and his kingdom sentence of excommunication. Of all the evils which could overtake a nation, to be excommunicated by the Pope was, in those days, the most tremendous. It amounted to nothing less than a total annihilation of government; it gave immunity to crime, and rendered contracts, and dealings of every kind, null and void. Strange to say, however, John not only contrived to hold out for some time against it, but accomplished the only successful enterprises of his reign, while lying under the ban of papal censure. He passed into Ireland, then devastated as much by the rapacity of the new settlers, as by the turbulence of the natives, where, after reducing both parties to obedience, and dividing the provinces into counties, he established the supremacy of the English laws, and caused English money to come into general circulation. In like manner, he repressed the spirit of the king of Scotland, whom the state of John's relations with the Pope had tempted to hazard a movement, and, compelling him to pay a fine of fifteen thousand marks, took his two daughters, with several of the principal Scottish nobility, as hostages for the future good-behaviour of their sovereign.

One arrow yet remained in the armoury of the Vatican, which Innocent proceeded to discharge. He pronounced against his refractory son sentence of deposition, and invited Philip to carry it into effect. Philip assembled a large army at Rouen, not from among his own vassals only, but from among all the adventurers of Europe, whom the publication of a crusade against John drew around his standard. He had been offered the vacant throne, and not without assurances of support from the discontented nobles of England, he made ready to seize it. John issued his orders for a general array of the nation, out of which were selected 60,000 well-armed soldiers; a force more than sufficient, had its loyalty been deserving of confi-

dence, to defend him against all his enemies. But, in proportion as danger threatened, John became more and more convinced that he was abhorred by his subjects; from whom he had no right to expect that even the apprehension of a foreign yoke would draw forth any strenuous exertions in his favour. His courage fell at last, and the Pope's legate, made aware of the circumstance, hastened over from the head-quarters of the French army to turn it to account. After a thousand equivocations and delays, this abject prince consented to resign his crown into the hands of the Pope; to accept it back again as a fief of the Holy See; to bind himself and his successors, by the oath of fealty, to obey the edicts of the successors of St. Peter, and to pay to his liege lord an annual tribute of one thousand marks. This was all that the supreme pontiff desired to accomplish. The king of France was directed to dismiss his troops, and to abstain from offering violence to the Pope's vassal. Stephen Langton took possession of his church; and, after a trifling skirmish, in which the fleet of England destroyed three hundred French vessels in their harbours, peace was restored. It is scarcely necessary to add, that Philip complained loudly of the wrong which had been done him by the ambitious head of the church; or that his complaints were disregarded.

It is not worth while to notice the feeble attempts made by John to recover his lost influence on the continent. Like almost all his martial undertakings, they ended in defeat; and by souring his temper, rendered him more and more prone to trample upon the rights and liberties of those over whom he yet exercised dominion. Of his promptitude to oppress, where he could oppress with impunity, no man appears to have been more aware than Archbishop Langton; the mode of whose induction to the most important office under the crown, was far from rendering him careless of the honour and happiness of his country. One of the first

measures of the new primate, when absolving the king from church-censures, was to obtain from him an oath, that he would henceforth govern according to the good laws of King Edward. That oath, as it was taken in ignorance of the obligation implied, John neither endeavoured nor desired to keep; nor was he more mindful of a second engagement, into which his nobles led him, that he would observe the charter granted by the first Henry. But the primate, who had once stood forward as the vindicator of public liberty, gave proof that he was not a man to be deterred from his purposes by any consideration of personal risk. Finding that the king's enormities became more serious every day, he encouraged the barons to enter into a confederation against him; and a solemn league was in consequence ratified, on the 20th of November, at St. Edmund'sbury, by which a large portion of them became bound to carve out a charter of public liberty with their swords.

Early in January, 1215, the confederated nobles repaired to London, arrayed in armour, and attended by a numerous retinue. They presented their petition to the king, who at first endeavoured by menaces to intimidate them, and finding that expedient fail, strove to defeat their object by delay. They granted him an interval till the time of Easter, on receiving as hostages the archbishop, the bishop of Ely, and the earl marshal; and departed, in the firm assurance that he would circumvent them if he could. Both sides immediately applied to the Pope, who espoused the cause of his vassal, without, however, in the slightest degree, casting a damp upon the ardour of the nobles, or shaking the good faith of the archbishop; and when Easter came, both sides saw that the chances of an amicable adjustment were as far removed as ever. The barons took the field with two thousand knights, and a numerous host of inferior degree, and choosing Robert Fitz-

walter for their chief, conferred upon him the title of "Mareschal of the army of God and of the Holy Church." Everywhere success attended them; and though the king at first declared, that he would rather perish than assent to their demands, he soon found that they possessed a power with which it would be vain for him to contend. He proposed first to submit their differences to the decision of the supreme pontiff; then to be governed by the award of arbitrators, chosen in equal numbers by himself and the rebels; till at last finding himself deserted by all, save the earl of Pembroke, and seven knights of lesser power, he agreed to accept whatever terms they might impose upon him. A document had already been drawn up, in which all the grievances of the nation were set forth, as well as the arrangements which were esteemed necessary to secure their removal. This they submitted to his consideration, at a place called Runnymede, midway between the village of Staines and Windsor Castle; and there, on the 19th of June, 1215, in the presence of all the assembled warriors and prelates of the kingdom, was the Great Charter signed and delivered. To the transactions of that memorable day, we are bound to look back, as to the dawn of free government in England; it will therefore be necessary to give a somewhat particular account of the most important of the privileges which were secured to the English subject, by the deed in question.

It is past dispute, that the barons were induced to take up arms, principally by the desire of abridging the powers of the crown, and extending the privileges of their own order. Many articles in the Great Charter are accordingly pointed against abuses, which, as they have entirely disappeared with the downfall of the system of feuds, it would be a waste of time to enumerate. But in order to secure for their cause a support, without which it might have failed to prosper, the

barons had found it necessary to carry the people along with them, and the people were not forgotten in the adjustment of those claims which they made upon their defeated sovereign. After fixing the amount of aids and scutages which should henceforth be exacted from the king's vassals, and limiting the occasions of exaction to the three established incidents*, the charter went on to require, that talliage† should not be levied, except with the consent of the Great Council, either upon London, or any other of the towns within the realm. To constitute the council, to which these important duties were assigned, the charter takes from the king the following pledge: "We shall cause the prelates and the greater barons to be separately summoned by our letters; and we shall direct our sheriffs and bailiffs to summon generally all who hold of us in chief; and we shall take care to publish the summons in the same way, and give forty days' notice of the meeting."

In this clause we discover an exact counterpart of the upper house of parliament as it now exists; the lower differs in many essential particulars from the council, which was composed of direct tenants of the crown. But the first outline of a parliamentary constitution is given, while the principle is fully established, that taxation shall take place only by consent of those taxed. It was not, however, of this matter alone that the authors of Magna Charta were careful: they determined that "no freeman may be imprisoned or outlawed, or in any manner injured, nor proceeded

* There were three occasions on which the liege lord was entitled, by recognised usage, to pecuniary aid from his vassals,—namely, to procure his own ransom, to free his estate at the knighting of his eldest son, and to celebrate the marriage of his eldest daughter. Latterly these occasions had been grossly abused.

† An imposition assessed on cities, and on freemen who owed no military service.

against, otherwise than by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land;" and that the king "should sell, delay, or deny, justice to none." In like manner, tempering justice with mercy, they established, that "a freeman shall be amerced in proportion to his offence, saving his confinement, a merchant saving his merchandise, and a villain saving his wagonage;" or, in other words, that fines, even when legally awarded, shall not exceed the means of the delinquent, or overwhelm him in irretrievable ruin. They provided, moreover, for regularity in the administration of justice, by fixing the supreme civil court in one place, instead of permitting it to follow, as it had formerly done, the movements of the king's person; and they delivered commerce from innumerable shackles, by securing to foreign merchants, whose countries were at peace with England, the liberty of coming and going at will. The right of quitting the kingdom, and returning to it again, was also secured to every subject, saving his allegiance. In a word, the foundation was laid of that system of free government which became, as its energies were developed, the realization of the brightest dream which the ancient sages ever ventured to cherish, but of the possibility of realizing which none among them presumed to encourage a hope. Let it not be forgotten, that for so great a boon the people of England are indebted to a class of men, whose descendants, though under different circumstances, still remain to defend, both against royal usurpation and popular frenzy, the liberty for which their forefathers fought and conquered.

Distrusting the good faith of a prince who had so often deceived them, the barons were not satisfied with obtaining from John a formal ratification of the charter. They insisted, that the authority of the crown should, in effect, be vested in twenty-five of their number, and that they should retain for awhile the

command both of the city and Tower of London. John became furious, under a sense of the degradation to which he had been subjected. He withdrew to the Isle of Wight, as if to hide his disgrace in solitude, and there gave himself up entirely to schemes of revenge. He caused a number of mercenary troops to be enrolled on the continent,—induced the Pope to absolve him from his vows, and to excommunicate his enemies, and taking the field at a moment when the barons were least prepared to resist him, carried fire and sword with impunity through the kingdom. The barons, rendered desperate by the prospect which his successes held out, had recourse to foreign aid, which they did not scruple to purchase at the sacrifice of national honour. They offered the crown to Louis, the eldest son of Philip of France, and put into his hands five-and-twenty hostages for the performance of their engage-



The Great Seal of John.

ments. Louis hastened to secure the prize which was thus, as it were, forced upon him. He crossed the Channel with seven thousand men, was joined by numerous deserters from John's mercenaries, as well as by many nobles; and, reaching London unopposed, was there acknowledged as king of England by most of the barons and burgesses. But an unwise display of partiality for his own countrymen soon caused the tide of popular favour to turn,—and John was again joined by multitudes of all ranks in his camp at Lynn. He immediately put his troops in motion for the purpose of bringing on a battle, which, however terminating, must have occasioned serious evil to the country. The loss of his baggage, however, while marching along the sea-shore, by an influx of the tide, for which he was unprepared, so preyed upon his mind, that he fell into a grievous distemper, and on the 1st of October, 1216, he died at Newark, in the forty-ninth year of his age, and eighteenth of his reign.

CHAPTER VIII.

HENRY THE THIRD.—HIS WEAKNESS.—GOVERNMENTS OF THE EARL OF PEMBROKE AND THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.—HENRY'S MISCONDUCT.—DISCONTENT OF THE BARONS.—SIMON DE MONTFORT, EARL OF LEICESTER.—HIS GREAT POWER.—INTRODUCES AN IMPORTANT CHANGE INTO THE CONSTITUTION OF PARLIAMENT.—PRINCE EDWARD.—HIS SUCCESSFUL RESISTANCE TO LEICESTER.—HENRY RESTORED TO POWER.—THE PRINCE UNDERTAKES A CRUSADE.—HENRY'S DEATH.

[A. D. 1216 to A. D. 1272.]

FIVE children survived this weak and worthless monarch, namely, two sons and three daughters. The latter were married respectively to Alexander, king of Scotland, to the earl of Pembroke, and to the emperor, Frederic the Second; the former were very young at the father's decease,—Henry, the eldest, being barely nine, Richard little more than seven years of age. Young as he was, however, Prince Henry proceeded, without loss of time, to Gloucester, where, in the presence of the Pope's legate, and a few noblemen, he went through the ceremony of a coronation. He owed the rapidity and decision of this movement to his uncle, the earl of Pembroke, an upright and an able man, on whom the guardianship of the minor had devolved; and who, causing the Great Charter to be ratified, and regulating his own conduct by its spirit, not only confirmed in their allegiance those who already adhered to the king's standard, but gained over, from day to day, fresh deserters from the party of Louis. The consequence was, that after sustaining a serious reverse at Lincoln, and having his fleet, which conveyed supplies from France, defeated and dispersed, Louis was glad to conclude a treaty with the Protector; abandoning all claim to the sovereignty of England, on

condition that a general amnesty should be extended to his adherents.

So long as the Protector survived, the affairs of state were conducted with extraordinary vigour and propriety. The defects in the king's character, too, continued to pass unobserved, for the talent and justice of his minister screened them; but the death of Pembroke, which occurred in 1220, opened a door, through which numerous abuses were, in due time, introduced. Henry was mild and placable,—in private life he possessed many virtues, but he was altogether unfitted for command. He had no opinions of his own, and, like all who lean implicitly on the judgments of others, he was of necessity the tool of each new adviser. The vice of favouritism, moreover, in kings both mischievous and full of danger, was with him a ruling passion; and he indulged it without regard either to the worth of the individual, or the feelings of the community. Such a proceeding, especially in a rude age, could not fail to excite universal disgust, while it brought serious evils both upon the king and the subject. On the death of Pembroke, Henry gave his unlimited confidence to the chief justiciary, Hubert de Burgh, a man of great ability, of invincible courage, and not unworthy of the trust reposed in him. For the space of eleven years De Burgh carried on the government, sternly, perhaps, but well; for he caused most of the barons who had taken advantage of the troubles during John's reign, to surrender their castles, and give up the lands which they had usurped. But the vigour of Hubert's proceeding, rewarded as it was by a prodigious accession to himself of wealth and honours, gave umbrage even to the well-disposed, and united all the turbulent against him. Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, a Poitevin by birth, was the foremost in this cabal. He had held offices of high trust under John, and was

associated with Hubert in the guardianship of Henry; but the superior talent of Hubert kept him in the back-ground, and compelled him to withdraw, for a time, from the kingdom. He never forgave the injury, nor ceased, during his exile, to meditate upon the most convenient means of obtaining revenge.

The commotions in France, at the accession of Louis the Ninth, tempted Henry to aim at the recovery of his continental dominions. He delayed the enterprise too long, and after wasting, in idle shows, the supplies which the parliament had granted, returned home, covered with disgrace, and devoured by chagrin. For some time previously, he had begun to grow weary of his minister. Weak princes invariably become tired of their servants who have served them long, no matter how faithfully,—though the absence of moral courage usually hinders them from obeying their own wishes, till some accident bring matters to a crisis. The failure of this expedition, for which he was himself alone to blame, Henry attributed to the misconduct of Hubert; and he found a ready listener in Peter des Roches, who, at this critical juncture, arrived in London. De Burgh fell rapidly into disgrace. He was accused of many crimes, from which murder and magic were not excluded; and, despairing of justice, endeavoured to save at least his life, by seeking shelter within the priory of Merton. At first the king commanded him to be dragged from the sanctuary; but it was suggested that such a proceeding might give umbrage to the church, and Henry required him to come forth, with an assurance that five months would be afforded to prepare for his trial. But while passing to Bury St. Edmund's, for the purpose of visiting his wife, De Burgh was again pursued, overtaken, and forced to seek shelter in a church. Yet the issue of all these persecutions was not such as, from the acrimony with which they were conducted, might have been anticipated. De Burgh

was plundered of a large portion of his property, and stripped of all his offices and influence; but he was permitted to withdraw into private life, master of a larger fortune than had descended to him from his ancestors.

The void in the king's confidence which the fall of De Burgh had occasioned, was immediately occupied by Peter des Roches. The change of favourites proved no way advantageous to the English people; for Des Roches hastened to fill the palace with adventurers from his native country, by whom every office of trust and of emolument was engrossed. Indignant at this proceeding, the barons, when summoned to meet their sovereign in parliament, not only refused to come, but sent him word, that if he failed to dismiss his foreigners, they would expel both him and them, and give the crown to one more worthy to wear it. Richard, earl Marshal, the third of that powerful family, was the leader in this opposition; and on him the fury of the bishop of Winchester poured out its violence. He was defeated in the field, forced to flee into Ireland, and there murdered; but the bitterness with which the bishop prosecuted his schemes of vengeance, proved fatal to himself. The church interfered; and at the entreaty of the archbishop of Canterbury, Des Roches was sent back to his diocese, while his Poitevins were peremptorily required to quit the kingdom.

Scarcely was this grievance removed, ere fresh causes of discontent arose, in the favour shown to a host of new adventurers, whom Eleanor, daughter of the count of Provence, on her marriage with Henry, brought over in her train. These, not content to absorb what little remained of crown-lands, prevailed upon the Pope to absolve their patron from his engagements; and persuaded the patron himself to resume numerous grants, which he had already conferred upon English noblemen. A determined opposition was offered to this measure,

and it prevailed: but neither the threats nor the remonstrances of the nobles could cure the king of his partiality for strangers. The Provençals were shortly succeeded by four of Henry's brothers,—the sons of his mother Isabella; who, on the demise of John, had married the count de la Marche; to whom, it will be recollected, she was originally betrothed. Upon them, and their Gascon attendants, Henry bestowed honours with a profuse hand; and they made use of their influence only to insult the native nobility, and trample upon the laws. "What are the English laws to us?" was a common form of expression among them; and as men are at least as much moved by insult, as by serious injuries, the indignation of the people became more and more conspicuous every day.

A second continental expedition, which ended, like the former, in disaster, served but to increase the general discontent; which the gross abuse of authority displayed by the Pope, in his dealings both with the clergy and the king, filled up to overflowing. For some time back, the Holy See had advanced a claim to the property of all the ecclesiastical benefices in the kingdom. The archbishop of Canterbury could no longer be said to be elected even by the monks of St. Augustine's; for unless they chose the individual nominated immediately at Rome, their choice was not confirmed. All bishops and abbots, moreover, as well as the parochial clergy, were expected to contribute to the parochial necessities of his Holiness, whose demands became more and more exorbitant every day, in exact proportion to the facility with which they were admitted. The clergy would have resisted these aggressions, had they found in the king a willing or a competent supporter, and not unnaturally transferred some portion of their anger to him, when they saw that he deserted them. But the circumstance which gave the last blow to Henry's falling influence, was the readiness with which he engaged,

at the suggestion of the sovereign Pontiff, in a Quixotic attempt to subdue the island of Sicily. To attain that end, he squandered away all the money in his treasury, and on applying to his lay barons for aid, received a flat refusal. His only resource was an appeal to the clergy, who, plundered both by their lay and spiritual chief, became not less discontented than the barons, and exhibited a disposition to embark in any enterprise which might hold out a prospect of deliverance from oppression.

Overwhelmed by debt, and destitute of the means of carrying on his government, Henry was at last compelled to summon a parliament. He solicited a scutage, and was answered, that till he should have ratified the Great Charter, and sworn to observe its enactments, not a mark would be afforded. Henry made no scruple to comply with this demand. He took the oath, after listening to the solemn appeal of the prelates, who denounced against him who should violate his engagement, the sentence of excommunication; and having received his supplies, went on, as before, to set all moral restraint at defiance. The temper of the times was not such as to brook these repeated indignities; and, a competent leader presenting himself, the discontented barons prepared to vindicate their own privileges, by seriously abridging the prerogatives of the crown.

Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, the son of that chief who signalized both his valour and his cruelty in the crusade against the Albigenses, was the most distinguished of all the strangers who settled in England during Henry's reign. Neither his foreign extraction, nor his marriage with the king's sister, the countess dowager of Pembroke, hindered him from espousing the cause of the malecontents, or suggesting a plan, by which he hoped to transfer, eventually, to himself, all the authority of the government. On

receiving a fresh summons to meet their sovereign in parliament, the barons, by Leicester's advice, obeyed; but they came in complete armour, and attended by numerous bands of retainers. The king was alarmed, and after listening to their reproaches, promised to call another council at Oxford. If he hoped, in the interval, to collect resources with which to oppose the nobles, Henry mistook both his own character, and the sentiments of the nation. When the barons assembled again, they presented an aspect still more menacing than before; and Henry was compelled to assent to every proposition which they submitted to him for consideration. A totally new constitution was given to the government. Twenty-four barons were selected; twelve from among the king's ministers, and twelve at the nomination of parliament, to whom was granted unlimited authority to reform the state; while the king himself, with his son, prince Edward, as well as the whole of the nobility present, swore to maintain whatever ordinances they might think proper to enact. As might have been anticipated, Leicester placed himself at the head of this commission, of which all the measures were directed by his secret influence.

The first of Leicester's acts in his new capacity was specious; its consequences have been beneficially felt, down to the present times. He directed that four knights should be chosen in each shire, who, after inquiring into the condition of their respective counties, should meet the barons in parliament, and lay before them a list of grievances, in order that they might be redressed. The parliaments themselves, again, were directed to meet three times in each year, when they expected to exercise an unlimited control over the proceedings of the commissioners. So far, little ground of just offence was given; more especially as Leicester and his colleagues professed to wield but a temporary

authority, which they were pledged to lay aside, as soon as the novel constitution should be completed. But their future proceedings were dictated by a widely different spirit. They set aside the king's governors, and placed creatures of their own in all the royal castles. They prohibited the judges of assize from holding their courts, except once in seven years. They caused an irresponsible power to be intrusted to twelve of their own body, whose decrees, during the recesses of parliament, were to have the force of law; and, indifferent alike to the honour of the crown and the liberties of the people, bent all their energies to the enlargement of their own influence. The knights of the shire soon began to feel that they had made but a sorry exchange of masters. They offered to assist the prince with all their means, provided he would place himself in opposition to the usurpation, and were not a little disappointed when they found him observant of his oath, even while he acknowledged his hatred of the system which he had sworn to uphold.

For some years the barons continued to exercise their functions, to the great oppression of the people and degradation of the sovereign. An ineffectual attempt on Henry's part to displace them, served only to confirm their power; which they abused so far as to require from him an engagement, that the commission should continue not only during the remainder of his own reign, but throughout that of his successor. This gross attack upon the monarchical principle sufficed to allay the scruples of prince Edward. He took up arms, and infused so much of vigour into the councils and conduct of his partisans, that even Leicester found it necessary to come to a compromise. The case in dispute was accordingly referred to the decision of the king of France,—one of the most upright as well as able monarchs that ever sat upon a throne,—who, pronouncing that the objects of the commission had been

attained, and that its further existence would be mischievous, directed the king's castles to be restored, and a general amnesty to be proclaimed on both sides. This award accorded ill with the ambitious designs of Leicester. Though a voluntary exile at the moment, (for there had arisen among his faction dissensions, of which he became the victim,) he brought all his talent for intrigue into play, and soon formed a party, of which he again put himself at the head. Both sides prepared for war, and many skirmishes were fought, with various success, in different counties. But Leicester, whose genius for war appears to have been great, brought on at last a decisive battle near Lewes,—in which, though worsted at its commencement, he obtained a complete victory. King Henry, his brother Richard, elected king of the Romans, with many other chiefs of the royalists, were made prisoners; while prince Edward, in order to obtain his father's release, voluntarily became an hostage in the hands of his enemy.

The consequences of this event were, for a while, eminently advantageous to Leicester, who dictated his own terms, and was in a situation to render them sufficiently severe. Had he exercised common prudence, indeed, it seems difficult to imagine, that he could have failed in transferring the supreme authority to himself;—but equally reluctant, as it would appear, to assume the loftiest station, and to retire into that of a private nobleman, he found his difficulties increase upon him from day to day. Leicester was avaricious. He seized for his own use the estates of eighteen forfeited barons, and disgusted many of his associates by refusing to share with them the spoils,—while the openness with which he engrossed all the powers of the state, in defiance even of the commissioners, excited the envy and hatred of others. Under these circumstances Leicester endeavoured to strengthen his own hands, by appealing to the people. Hitherto the inhabitants of boroughs and

cities had been too much despised to be admitted to any share in the general government of the kingdom: Leicester directed the sheriffs to summon to parliament two representatives from each, whom he associated with the knights, elected on similar warrant by the shires; and causing the whole to assemble in a chamber apart from that of the barons, established the rude outline of what has since grown up into the English House of Commons.

Important as they were, both in their immediate and remote effects, these changes in the constitution failed to confirm the authority of their author, who soon discovered, that the instruments of which he hoped to make use were neither so flexible nor so efficient as he had contemplated. The earl of Gloucester, moreover, a nobleman second in point of power only to himself, fell off from him, and the queen, who had assembled a numerous army of mercenaries, threatened him from the opposite shores. Still he maintained himself on the giddy height to which he had climbed,—and hoping to make use of the prince, restored him to nominal freedom in the presence of the barons, whom he assembled to witness the proceeding. This done, he marched to Hereford, carrying with him the king, the prince, and a numerous body of knights, with the intention of crushing Gloucester, by whom the royal standard had been unfurled. But while, at the suggestion of mutual friends, the rival earls opened a negotiation, throughout which either party strove only to overreach the other, prince Edward contrived to effect his escape; and, joining the faction of Gloucester, gave to it a superiority of which immediate use was made. It was to no purpose that Leicester directed his son to lead the Londoners to his aid, a class of persons remarkable, even in those days, for impatience under the control of authority. The reinforcements, encamping with singular carelessness,

were attacked and destroyed at Kenilworth, while the prince, possessing himself of their standards, used them as a disguise in the operations which he immediately conducted against Leicester himself. In a great battle fought at Evesham, on the 6th of August, 1265, the projects of this ambitious man were cut short. He fell covered with wounds, and his body, after having been shamefully mangled, by whose directions does not appear, was buried, at the king's desire, in the church of the abbey.

The battle of Evesham, in which he had well-nigh fallen, restored to Henry the powers of the crown, to which by far the greater proportion of those so lately in arms, hastened to give in their submission. A few, however, continued to hold out, of whom some took refuge in the isles of Axholme and Ely, some in Dover castle, while others, under a gallant chief named Adam de Gourdon, maintained themselves in the forests of Hampshire. Against these prince Edward conducted his forces; and it is told of him, that when attacking de Gourdon's camp, he sprang over the ditch, and engaged the outlaw hand to hand. A fierce combat ensued, which ended in the overthrow of Gourdon, whom Edward beat from his horse, and compelled to surrender. But valour, whether exercised in a good or a bad cause, was then held in so much esteem, that Edward, instead of putting his captive to death, received him into favour. He was introduced the same night to the queen at Guildford, and served his captor ever after with the utmost fidelity.

The reduction of this rebel, followed, as it soon afterwards was, by the submission of the rest, restored peace to England. It enabled the king, likewise, to revise the sentences of outlawry and confiscation which his first free parliament had, with too little discrimination, passed; so that moderate fines, with here and there the additional penalty of imprisonment, were

permitted to atone for the grossest delinquency. Even the mayor of London escaped with this punishment, while the countess of Leicester, with her two sons, were commanded to quit the kingdom. All this was highly satisfactory to Edward, who, superior to the passions which act most powerfully on common minds, forgot the wrongs offered to himself and his family, in his desire to promote the general welfare of the state. It enabled him, likewise, to accomplish a design which he had long meditated, that of assuming the cross, and reviving in Palestine the recollection of England's glory, when her knights and warriors fought under the guidance of Cœur de Lion. Edward carried with him in this expedition the earl of Gloucester, who had exhibited more than once a disposition to forget his engagements,—and was absent in the whole rather more than two years. He rendered his own name, and that of his nation, illustrious, by the display of extraordinary valour and conduct, insomuch that the Saracens employed an assassin, happily without success, to deliver them from the most formidable of their enemies. But his absence from home, while it failed to save the last Christian hold from capture, let loose again, throughout England, all the bad passions of a rude age. The barons became turbulent and rebellious, the people were plundered, and the king possessed no authority to restrain the one, or to relieve the other. At last, after having repeatedly written to recall his son, he sank under a weight which he was never calculated to sustain, and on the 16th of November, 1272, expired at St. Edmund'sbury, in the 64th year of his age, and fifty-sixth of his reign.

Feeble as were the hands which swayed the sceptre throughout this extended period, the reign of Henry has justly been pronounced one of the most interesting and important in the annals of England. It was then that the formal adjustment of a system of

civil government took place, which the progress of time and events had been slowly but surely maturing. Of the growth of that system it is not very difficult to trace the progress. Under the early Norman princes, not less than during the Saxon times, the king of England, held the station rather of a feudal superior than of a chief magistrate. Supported out of the revenue of his own domains, and entitled to fees and special services from his vassals, he appears not to have imposed, by legislative authority, general taxes on the people for the maintenance of good government, and the defence of the realm. Abuses might and did arise in the exaction both of dues and services; indeed, it was a main object of the Great Charter to correct the one, and to define the extent and nature of the other; but so long as the demands of the crown were limited to these, the uses of a parliament, except on extraordinary occasions, were very little understood. Without his great council, it is true that the king could enact no new laws; but the desire of law-making was then little felt, and custom was all to which the people looked for the administration of such laws as existed. In proportion, however, as his domains passed into the hands of favourites, and the custom of commuting military service for pecuniary aid became frequent, the sovereign found himself, with reference to his vassals, in a different position. His own personal extravagance, or the cupidity of those about him, rendered the frequent collection of scutages necessary, and excuses for demanding them were never difficult of invention. From the boroughs, likewise, which looked to him as their immediate superior, he began to require tallages, an impost founded on a conjectural and very uncertain estimate of the fortunes of individuals. Still they were only the king's vassals, or tenants *in capite*, who were expected to contribute to his necessities; on the

nation at large no such thing as a general tax had as yet been imposed.

When the barons and great ecclesiastics found these demands become too frequent, they resisted; and, by a process which has already been described, obtained an assurance, that henceforth neither scutage nor tallage should be levied, except by consent of parliament. This was the first step towards the establishment of a perpetual check upon the prerogatives of the crown, and the creation of an aristocracy, vested with the privilege of levying, by legislative process, imposts from the people at large. But it was not yet effectual to call forth the slumbering energies of the democracy, and hence, when others, besides the great military tenants of the crown, began to be immediately rated to the exigencies of the state, a fresh arrangement suggested itself. The king sent commissioners into every county, to persuade the gentry of the provinces to pay the scutage; and gave them authority to compromise and facilitate the adjustment of that matter, by conference with the parties taxed. Then followed the practice of calling to the metropolis representatives of the lesser military tenants, in order that they might treat with the crown respecting these contributions on general principles,—next came the appointment of certain knights, who should inquire into the grievances of their constituents, and report them to parliament,—and last of all, the association, though in a separate chamber, of such knights with the barons in their deliberations, which preceded the adjudication of a general tax.

The process by which the boroughs and cities rose to act their part in the general administration of affairs, though more gradual than this, is not less easily traced. Protected by royal charter from the tyranny of the barons, and authorized to elect their own magistrates, and frame their own by-laws, they

became, to a certain extent, a portion of the demesne of the crown; and, like other tenants *in capite*, were subject to the feudal incidents, as well as to the payment which has just been referred to under the designation of tallage. It was the original duty of the judges of assize to negotiate the payment of these assessments; though special commissioners occasionally supplied their place. But such matters could be regulated only by appeal to a general meeting of the burgesses; who by and by were required to send delegates to London, in order that the matter might be arranged with the king's immediate representative. This once accomplished, the association of the burgesses with the knights of the shire became inevitable. It appears, indeed, to have been comparatively slow in its growth, for we hear nothing either in Henry's reign, or in the early part of that of Edward the First, of the great union in one house of the deputies from the industrious classes, with the minor nobility. But the tendency of two bodies of elective members, whose chief concern in legislation was the same, to unite into one, was too natural to be resisted. At the close of Edward's reign, the English House of Commons, in its external construction, and even in its latent powers, was pretty nearly what it continued to be down to the memorable era of 1831.

With respect again to the nature of the qualification which originally conferred a right to vote in the election both of the county and city representatives, there does not appear to be that degree of obscurity, in which some writers have regarded it as involved. In counties, all who were capable of being suitors in the county-court; that is to say, all who held lands on feudal tenure, either from the crown directly, or from some other chief, (and all lands were held on such tenure, and on such only,) became voters at the election of county members. They, indeed, and they alone, were liable to taxation; for the rest of the community

were either villains or serfs, on neither of whom public burdens could fall, inasmuch as the contributions required from the first were paid to the freeholders, their immediate lords, while the last were but one degree removed from absolute slavery. In the boroughs and cities, again, the franchise was restricted entirely to freemen, none others being recognised as possessing any right to live under the immunities of the place. Thus was a new power created, which, though at first feeble and lightly esteemed, gained, age by age, additional strength, till it came at last to overbalance, by the weight of its influence, both the prerogatives of the crown, and the hereditary privileges of the nobility.



Great Seal of Henry the Third.

n. 56 p

CHAPTER IX.

EDWARD THE FIRST.—HIS POLICY.—SUBDUES WALES.—
 WARS WITH FRANCE AND SCOTLAND.—DISPUTES WITH
 THE NORMANS.—BATTLE OF STIRLING.—BATTLE OF
 FALKIRK.—DEATH OF WALLACE.—ROBERT BRUCE.—
 DEATH OF EDWARD.—HIS CHARACTER.—LAWS AND POLI-
 TICAL INSTITUTIONS.

[A.D. 1272 to A.D. 1306.]

PRINCE EDWARD had reached Sicily on his return from the Holy Land, when intelligence of the king's demise was communicated to him. It excited in him no other feeling than that of profound sorrow; for he was confident in the extent of his own resources, and assured of the devotion of his subjects. He therefore made no haste to ascend the vacant throne, but travelling at leisure, by way of Rome and Paris, enjoyed at every stage the pleasures of society, and the adulation of princes and prelates. He devoted some time, likewise, to the settlement of his continental provinces, where a spirit of turbulence and disaffection had of late begun to show itself, and did not decline a challenge from the count of Chalons, to tilt at his court with the best knights in Christendom. A thousand English men at arms and archers engaged, on that occasion, double their number of French cavaliers, headed, in what was called the *mêlée*, by the count of Chalons in person; and their blood becoming warm, the mock encounter assumed by degrees the aspect of a real battle. It terminated to the advantage of the English, who drove their opponents from the lists, and made a prisoner of their faithless host, overthrown in single combat by Edward himself.

On the 2nd of August, 1274, Edward departed for England; and on the 19th was crowned, together with his consort, at Westminster. He found the nation perfectly tranquil, for the remains of the Montfort party were without a leader; and the king's reputation, both for courage and conduct, enabled his council of regency to hinder such from presenting himself. In the adjustment of domestic affairs, therefore, all that seemed necessary, was to infuse a little more vigour into the proceedings of the judges and sheriffs, by whom certain bands of outlaws, which continued to haunt the forests, were hunted down, and the roads rendered secure to the unarmed traveller. But Edward was not possessed of a disposition which would permit him to sit down and to enjoy what others had earned. His ambition knew no bounds, and it soon led him to embark in a series of undertakings, which exhibit him in the light of a more crafty politician than had yet filled the English throne.

I have had occasion more than once to speak of the Welsh princes, sometimes as taking rank among the vassals of the English crown, sometimes as disturbing the peace of those counties which bordered upon their mountains. The relative position of the two states was, indeed, in many respects, anomalous. After maintaining, till late in the tenth century, a species of doubtful independence, the Welsh were compelled by Athelstan to become his tributaries. But the tribute appears to have been paid very irregularly even during the Saxon times, while to the first of the Norman princes it was entirely refused. A struggle accordingly began, which, in due time, brought into a state of feudal dependence, first the central districts, called Powis, and eventually, South Wales itself; while the principality of North Wales, called by the English Aberfraw and Snowdon, continued long to

assert and to maintain its independence. Even the princes of North Wales, however, were gradually induced to take part in the baronial wars of their neighbours, and, as a necessary consequence, to exchange their rude royalty for a high station among the Anglo-Norman lords; and, though no steps were taken to subdue them, during the troubled reigns of John, and Henry the Third, the foundations of their authority were sapped, beyond the hope of recovery.

One of Edward's first measures after his accession was to summon Llewellyn, prince of North Wales, to London, in order that he might do homage for his principality, as one of the great vassals of the crown. Llewellyn refused to obey, unless the king's son were given as an hostage for his safety, and pleaded as his excuse, that the king, in violation of a recent treaty, had offered an asylum in England, to many rebels and traitors from Wales. Probably, Edward was not displeased at this proceeding. He had learned to regard Llewellyn as an inveterate enemy, not only on account of the part which he took in the late rebellion, but because he had entered into a contract of marriage, since the restoration of tranquillity, with Eleanor, the sister of the deceased earl of Leicester. He therefore appealed to his parliament for aid, and having received a supply of one-fifteenth on all the moveables in the kingdom, devoted the winter to the enlistment of soldiers, and a general preparation for war.

There existed at this time, great disunion among the Welsh themselves. Rees ap Meredith, the prince of South Wales, an unwilling dependant on the sovereign of North Wales, and David, the brother of Llewellyn, joined the standard of the invader; who, early in the spring, marched an army across the Dee, made himself master of the island of Anglesea, and drove the natives to their forests and barren

mountains. There famine did the work of the sword, and Llewellyn was compelled to submit to such terms as the conqueror saw fit to impose. They were sufficiently severe at first; and, though ultimately softened, still implied the complete subjugation of Wales to the English crown. But the spirit of the people, so far from being broken by this reverse, became only more resolute to retrieve their tarnished honour; and, David returning to a sense of what was due to his native country, hostilities were soon renewed. They were of brief continuance, and proved eminently disastrous to the mountaineers. A few successes at the commencement rendering Llewellyn deaf to the remonstrances of the archbishop of Canterbury, Edward directed against him an overwhelming force, by which he was surprised, his troops defeated, and himself slain. David, his brother, held out for six months longer, taking refuge amid rocks and woods, and living the life rather of a bandit, than of the representative of a long line of princes. But his chiefs, becoming weary of a contest so unequal, fell off from him one by one, and in the end betrayed him and his wife into the hands of their enemies. David was carried to Shrewsbury, put upon his trial as a traitor, condemned, and executed under circumstances of peculiar cruelty. He was hanged, and cut into quarters, after his bowels had been taken out and burned before his face.

The fall of these princes completed the total subjugation of Wales, which has ever since formed an integral portion of the kingdom of England. It is due to the character of Edward, also, to state, that however relentless he may have been while prosecuting the war, his behaviour, after it came to a close, was marked both by humanity and sound judgment. He lingered among his new subjects a whole year, during which he laboured to excite in them a taste for agriculture and manufactures; he divided their principality

Their own historians assert, that the kings of Scotland did homage only for such lands as they possessed within the realm of England; the English writers affirm, that Scotland itself was held as a *fief*, as well under the Saxon princes as in the times of the Conqueror and his successors. Perhaps the weight of evidence is in favour of the latter theory; for it is certain that we find Scottish princes repeatedly attending the councils of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs, and one at least so far forgetful of his dignity, as to take his place among a crew of rowers, who guided on the Dee the royal barge. But however this may be, the formal abandonment by Richard of all the rights of a superior, which he sold to William the Lion for money, ought to have been regarded as setting the question at rest for ever. According to Edward's views of political honour, however, this latter arrangement deserved no notice. He contended, that an individual sovereign is not justified in prejudicing, for selfish purposes, the rights of the crown; and hence, that the claims of the king of England to exercise a feudal superiority in Scotland, were just as valid as they had ever been. When, therefore, the states of Scotland, in order to avoid the effusion of blood, proposed to him to become an arbiter in the disputed succession, he readily accepted the office,—asserting, at the same time, that independently of such reference, the position in which he stood towards the vacant *fief*, imposed upon him the duty of determining by whom it should henceforth be held.

It does not appear that the Scottish prelates and barons, to whom this claim had been communicated in a circular letter, entered any protest against it. Probably they did not anticipate any other result than the revival of an old dispute, which had never, at least in late times, been permitted to disturb the good understanding that prevailed between the two nations. But

when, agreeably to the summons of Edward, they met him and his northern barons at Norham, and were formally made aware by Brabazon, his chief justiciary, that the king came to settle, in his capacity of feudal superior, the question of succession to the Scottish crown, their surprise and consternation became very great. Both they and the candidates were, however, in the toils. They had brought with them no armed retinue, so that flight and resistance were alike impracticable; and hence, when urged to acknowledge Edward as Lord Paramount of Scotland, they could attempt nothing more than an evasion. "No answer can be given," said they, "while the throne is vacant." "By St. Edward," replied the king, "whose crown I wear, I will vindicate my just rights, or perish in the attempt." Such a threat, uttered at such a moment, proved more conclusive than a thousand arguments. The competitors first (and it is worthy of remark, that among them Bruce took the lead,) gave in their submission, and their example was immediately followed by the others. Finally, all the royal castles and fortresses were placed in Edward's hands, who, filling them with his own troops, and placing trusty officers in command, proceeded then, and not till then, to try the question at issue.

On the 10th of May, 1291, the Scottish estates met on the border; and on the 6th of November, 1292, after an inquiry, which had lasted eighteen months, the claims of John Baliol were pronounced to be valid. The new king immediately took the oaths of vassalage, and receiving back the royal castles, entered upon the duties of his government. But the petty indignities to which he soon became subject, taught him to feel the degradation into which he had fallen, and to lament the haste with which he had bartered away his own and his country's independence, for the worthless diadem of a vassal. Every subject against whom

judgment was awarded in one of the king's courts, carried his case, by appeal, to Edward; and Edward, receiving such appeals with shameless avidity, issued repeated summonses requiring Baliol to meet them. It would have been strange had the Scots, a fierce and haughty people, borne without impatience the insults offered to their prince. They insisted that he should resent them, by withdrawing the homage which both he and they had given; and an opportunity appearing to present itself, of taking this bold step in comparative safety, they harassed the feeble monarch with their reproaches, and compelled him to embrace it.

The duchy of Aquitaine was still held by the English monarch as a fief, or dependency, from the crown of France. It chanced, on a certain occasion, than an English and a Norman vessel repaired to the same port for the purpose of watering, and that a quarrel arose between two of the respective crews, which ended in the death of the Norman by the hand of the Englishman. The Normans, unable to take vengeance on the spot, fell upon an English ship at sea, out of which they dragged a passenger, a merchant from Bayonne, and hanged him, with a dog tied to his feet, from their own mast-head. A cruel maritime war arose out of these transactions,—not, indeed, between the nations, for the governments of the two kingdoms took no part in it, but between the seafaring people of the rival states, assisted, on the one side by the sailors of France and Genoa, on the other by those of Ireland and Gascony. For awhile no official notice was taken of this contest. The seamen slaughtered one another without mercy, for no quarter was given on either side; and the whole compass of the narrow seas was overspread with piracy. But when, after a formal challenge given and accepted, two hundred sail of French ships were defeated and taken by eighty vessels from Portsmouth and the Cinque Ports, Philip consi-

dered it necessary to interfere. He called upon Edward, as duke of Aquitaine, to give satisfaction, and prevailed upon him, in order to vindicate his own honour, as well as to avert the miseries of a war, to surrender the duchy, with the distinct understanding, that at the expiration of forty days it would be restored. The forty days elapsed, however, and no act of restoration took place, which so exasperated Edward, that after solemnly renouncing his allegiance, he collected a great army, and made ready to recover his domains with the sword. It was at this juncture that the Scottish nobles persuaded Baliol to withdraw his fealty from the English king; and to enter into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the French monarch.

Had Edward been permitted to follow up his own designs, and to carry his troops to the continent, crude and undigested as the plans of the Scottish nobles were, they might have been realized. A succession of adverse winds, however, detained him at Portsmouth, till the Welsh, who believed that he was gone, rose in rebellion, and he found it necessary to suspend his more distant operations, in order to restore peace at home. This was done without difficulty; after which he turned his attention to the north, where symptoms of disaffection had begun to multiply, and a conflagration appeared inevitable. Baliol, when required to attend the king's court, returned a flat denial, and a formal renunciation of homage in his own name and in that of his barons. "Felon fool!" exclaimed Edward, in a tone of contempt and pity; "but since he will not obey our summons, we must go and find him out." Troops were immediately marched to the border; and the Scots having struck the first blow, by surprising a detachment of a thousand men near Werk, the English crossed the frontier, and then war began in earnest. It was one of uninterrupted success on the part of the English. Under the walls of Dunbar, forty thousand

Scots, the flower of Baliol's army, were defeated with prodigious slaughter by twelve thousand English. Dunbar itself, as well as Roxburgh and Jedburgh, opened their gates. Berwick was taken by assault, seven thousand men fell in the struggle, and Edinburgh and Stirling, after a feeble show of resistance, surrendered. Edward, indeed, moved from the Tweed to the Tay without meeting anywhere with a check; and even the Highlanders, usually famous for their turbulence under a native prince, submitted. At the close of the year the whole of Scotland was in possession of the invader, who, after destroying the national archives, and removing from Scone the ancient block of marble, on which the Celtic kings had from time immemorial been enthroned, pronounced sentence of deposition against Baliol, and annexed his fief to the English crown.

Edward led back with him to London the deposed king of the Scots, to whom he assigned a residence in the Tower; but who eventually passed over into Flanders, where he lived and died in a station strictly private. He had placed garrisons in all the strong-holds, and appointed Warrenne, earl of Surrey, to be his deputy; and he calculated, not without reason, that by holding a steady but mild check upon the humours of his new subjects, he might reconcile them, by degrees, to their fate. Under this impression Edward, in whose mind the loss of Guienne continued to rankle, made preparations for a war on the Continent, and contracted alliances with the earl of Flanders and several of the princes of Germany. His treasury was, however, exhausted; and though he prevailed upon his parliament to grant supplies, these, including one-twelfth from the knights, and one-eighth from the burgesses, proved inadequate to the exigencies of the moment. He turned next to the clergy, from whom he made a demand of one-fifth of their moveables; and he sum-

moned their representatives to meet him in convocation. But the clergy, who had already been prohibited by pope Boniface from making any payments to their civil superior, rejected the application, and excited in no ordinary degree the king's anger; nevertheless, he adopted no harsh or tyrannical measures towards them. He contented himself with ordering, that as they declined to contribute to the maintenance of the civil power, the civil power should withdraw from them its protection. The consequences of this proclamation very speedily showed themselves. Wherever they went, the clergy were plundered with impunity, for the courts of law were shut against them, till the archbishop of Canterbury himself was reduced to the necessity of boarding, with a single attendant, in the family of one of his friends. By such proceedings the whole body were involved in serious distress. There was but one method of escaping from it; so they entered into a compromise, to which the king offered no objection, because, though it might seem to shield their honour, it put him in possession of the funds of which he stood in need.

His success in this controversy tempted the king to proceed further; and, by virtue of the royal prerogative, to impose a heavy tax upon all articles of merchandise intended for exportation. He directed seizures to be made, likewise, of wool, corn, and leather, and in order to swell his ranks, required the personal attendance of every landed proprietor, whose estate was valued at twenty pounds a year, no matter whether he held directly of the crown or of some other chief. Many of the barons, headed by Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford, the constable, and Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, the marshal of England, expressed their strong disapprobation of these proceedings; they refused to attend the king to his wars, and, powerful as Edward was, he found it necessary to apologize for illegal acts.

already done, and to give solemn pledges that they should not be repeated. But he had no sooner sailed for Flanders, leaving the prince of Wales at the head of a council of regency, than the constable and marshal again gathered their friends together, and demanded and obtained a solemn ratification of the Great Charter, and of various other deeds equally restrictive of the king's prerogative. Edward made many attempts to set these charters aside. But the spirit of liberty was by this time awake in England; and even he, the greatest monarch of his race, found it necessary to submit to such restrictions as his parliament esteemed it just to impose upon him.

While Edward was waging, abroad, a war of dubious issue, the Scots were recalled to a sense of national honour, chiefly through the heroism of a private gentleman, the renowned Sir William Wallace, of Ellerslie, in Renfrewshire. This man, having received the deepest insult at the hands of an English officer, put him to death, and fled to the woods, where he collected round his standard all whom the love of country, or habits of marauding and plunder, induced to hazard their lives against the oppressors. For a time his exploits were confined to sudden incursions, during which he surprised and cut to pieces petty detachments of the enemy; but as his fame enlarged itself, his ranks became daily better filled, and he adventured upon enterprises of greater moment. He marched suddenly to Scone, seized the treasure amassed by the English justiciary Ormesby, and failed to secure the person of Ormesby himself, only by reason of the haste with which he fled across the border. He then attacked, in succession, several garrisons, all of which he reduced, till a sudden panic falling upon the English, they began with the utmost precipitation to escape into their own country. Many Scottish nobles and gentlemen now joined him. Sir William Douglas, Sir Alexander Lindsay, Sir

Andrew Murray, and other chiefs of note, took up arms in the same righteous cause; and even Robert Bruce, the young earl of Carrick, gave to it a clandestine support. But Warrenne, to whom the care of preserving order in Scotland had been committed, soon passed the Tweed, at the head of forty thousand men; and coming upon the patriots by surprise, at Irvine, overthrew them with great slaughter. Almost all the principal gentry returned, on the instant, to their allegiance. Wallace and Murray alone refused to give in their submission, and, retreating towards the north-west, exerted all their energies to repair the losses which their army had sustained.

Eager to put an end to this troublesome rebellion, Warrenne marched to Stirling, in the vicinity of which, though on the further side of the Forth, he found Wallace encamped. A narrow bridge spanned the stream, of a width barely sufficient to admit of the passage of two horsemen abreast, by which Warrenne, carried away, as is said, by the impatience of his colleague, Cressingham, endeavoured to cross, for the purpose of attacking his enemy. But Wallace, who occupied the roots of the Ochil hills, no sooner beheld the blunder, than he hastened to take advantage of it. The leading division of the English was attacked, and cut to pieces ere it could form; the bridge was broken down, and the remains of the host fled, in irretrievable confusion, to Berwick. Immediately all the castles and fortified towns opened their gates, and Scotland, under the guardianship of its deliverer, was, for a brief space, free.

All this while Edward was on the continent, where the war, though eagerly begun, languished on both sides, till, by the intervention of Pope Boniface, it was brought to a temporary conclusion. That pontiff, after two years of unprofitable exertion, prevailed upon the kings of England and France to suspend their quarrel,

and Edward hurried back to retrieve his losses nearer home. After ratifying the terms to which his council of regency had been compelled to submit, he put himself at the head of eight thousand horse and eighty thousand foot, with which he marched to chastise the Scots. From Berwick to the Forth no enemy opposed him. Wallace, conscious of his own weakness, contented himself with devastating the country,—a mode of warfare which had often availed before, and proved not absolutely useless in this instance. But the king bearing himself boldly amid numerous privations, continued to press on, and finally brought his enemy to a battle on the moor of Falkirk. It ended in the total discomfiture of the Scots, whose men at arms fled without couching a lance, and whose gallant spearmen were mowed down by the English archers, the best and bravest infantry in the world.

Once more the majority of those who had joined Wallace while prosperous, forsook him in his adversity; while among the remainder a spirit of jealousy arose, which induced him to withdraw, for a time, from public life. He prevailed, indeed, upon the people to elect to the regency John Comyn, earl of Badenoch, the nephew of Baliol, who continued bravely to maintain the cause of his country; and on the retreat of Edward, who fell back after his victory at Falkirk, assumed the offensive. But not even a victory gained by the Scots at Roslyn, though both brilliant and decisive, sufficed to arrest the tide which had set in against them. Edward, after combating an absurd claim of the Pope to be regarded as the only legitimate sovereign of Scotland, and confirming the peace with France, by a double marriage*, put himself a third time at the head of an army, with which he overran the whole of the open country, and

* He himself married Margaret, the sister, and his son, though only thirteen years of age, was united, by proxy, to Isabella, the daughter of Philip of France.

penetrated to Caithness itself. The little castle of Brechin, indeed, refused to open its gates, till after a siege of twenty days, and Stirling, a place of greater importance, held out for three months; but with the exception of these places, neither tower nor town opposed his progress. That, however, which, more than any thing besides, seemed to assure him of repose, was the capture of the high-spirited Wallace, whom a faithless friend, by name Sir John Monteith, betrayed into his hands. If Edward's conduct towards Scotland had been unjust, it was the injustice of an ambitious, a brave, and a high-spirited warrior. His treatment of Wallace gave proofs of a vindictive spirit, for the most part the companion of cowardice alone. He caused him to be tried by a jury of Englishmen, on a charge of high-treason; and a sentence of guilty being returned, the illustrious patriot was beheaded, and his mangled limbs sent to different parts of the kingdom.

In the results which he had anticipated from the judicial murder of Wallace, Edward soon found himself deceived. There had accompanied him into Scotland, on the occasion of his late inroad, Robert Bruce, the grandson of that Bruce who opposed the pretensions of Baliol to the Scottish throne. Foremost among the English chivalry, Bruce had greatly distinguished himself at the fatal battle of Falkirk; and pursuing a band of fugitives, suddenly found himself in the presence of Wallace, the little river Carron alone flowing between them. It would appear from the accounts which have come down to us, that the warriors were mutually known to one another, for they reined up their horses, and entered at once into conversation. Bruce remonstrated with Wallace on the utter hopelessness of the enterprise in which he had embarked, while Wallace strove to infuse into the mind of his countryman some portion of the spirit which animated himself. The efforts of the patriot were not unsuccessful. Bruce

returned, indeed, with Edward to the English capital, and continued to wear the aspect of a devoted partisan to the cause of usurpation; but his whole soul was thenceforth given up to the idea of redeeming Scotland from slavery, and in due time his plans were matured. He communicated them to John Comyn, a powerful nobleman, with whom he lived on terms of intimacy; who professed to enter cordially into the design. But Bruce had no sooner quitted him, than Comyn disclosed all to the king, and measures were forthwith taken to involve the whole family of Bruce in one common ruin.

Bruce was in London, when a friend, who chanced to gain a knowledge of his danger, fell upon the following ingenious device to save him. He sent to him a pair of gilt spurs, and a purse of gold, which he pretended to have borrowed, and left it to the ingenuity of the young man himself to interpret the symbol. Bruce instantly guessed how matters stood, and causing his horse to be shod backwards, for the purpose of baffling pursuit in the snow, rode off, in all haste, by unfrequented ways, towards Scotland. He reached Dumfries in safety, where he found a large assemblage of nobles, among whom the traitor Comyn was numbered, and having avowed his intention to live or die for Scotland, was acknowledged by all as king. Comyn alone held out. He saw too much danger in the enterprise, and would have withdrawn from it, but Bruce, aware of his former treachery, resolved that he should not live to scatter dissension among his countrymen. When the meeting broke up, Comyn withdrew to the cloisters of the Gray Friars, where he was attacked by Bruce, sword in hand, and slain.

The murder of Comyn, if the deed deserves so foul a name, left the Scottish nobles without a hope of pardon. They ran to arms, and headed by Bruce, soon made themselves masters of all the open country. A few fortresses still held out; though among these by

far the greater proportion submitted, and Bruce was solemnly crowned at Scoone, by the archbishop of St. Andrew's. Nevertheless, Edward was not disheartened by these unexampled difficulties. He sent Aymer de Valence with a considerable force into Scotland, who attacking Bruce unexpectedly at Methven, in Perthshire, overthrew him with great slaughter, and executed as traitors the earl of Athol, Sir Simon Fraser, and Sir Christopher Seton, who fell, as prisoners, into his hands. Edward, however, burned for more ample vengeance than this. He collected a large army, and marched towards the border, with the intention of making a desert of a country which had so often rebelled against his government, when he was seized with a severe illness, from which he never recovered. He died in camp on the plain of Burgh, near Carlisle, on the 7th of July, 1306, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and thirty-fifth of his reign.

Edward the First has justly been accounted one of the greatest monarchs that ever sat upon the English throne. Whatever may be said as to the strict justice of some points in his foreign policy, this praise at least cannot be denied to him, that he laboured to advance, while gratifying a lofty ambition, the best interests of his country, without materially affecting the real happiness of those whom he treated as enemies. The annexation of Wales and Scotland, for example, to the English crown, might, perhaps, be a measure of more than doubtful equity; but the advantage was so visible, even to the conquered nations themselves, of uniting the whole island under one head, that, even in the attempt, the policy of Edward deserves to be treated with indulgence. It is, however, by examining his system of domestic government, that we discover the great superiority of Edward over all who went before, and to most of the English sovereigns

who have succeeded him. By no means personally averse to the exercise of arbitrary power, he nevertheless restrained his subjects from oppressing one another, and secured to the dominion of the laws a degree of solidity to which it had never previously attained. It is true, that of many of the improvements which were introduced both into the general administration of affairs, and the constitution of the legislative body, the king cannot be regarded as the immediate cause. The progress of events brought these gradually about, and if he gave to them consistency and form, he did so under an influence which it would have been impossible to control. Nevertheless, the monarch who could read, as he did, the signs of the times, and, without overleaping the bounds of moderation, had the good sense to make them his guide for all useful purposes, deserves the full meed of praise which has been bestowed on Edward the First by the ablest writers of all ages. Thus it was he who settled the jurisdiction of the several law-courts,—who first established the office of justice of peace,—who abstained from the practice, too common before him, of interrupting the course of law by mandates from the privy council; and who encouraged trade, by giving to merchants an easy method of recovering their debts. He protected foreign commerce, also, by granting to the strangers who conducted it, a charter or declaration of protection, and assigning to them juries, composed one half of Englishmen, the other of foreigners. His dealings, with reference to lay and ecclesiastical land-owners, were, indeed, somewhat contradictory. While he permitted the former to entail their estates, of which they might increase the dimensions at will, he restricted the latter, by the celebrated statute of Mortmain, from acquiring any additional interest in the soil. Still the

great bent of his policy was throughout the same, namely, to diminish the influence of the barons; and he did not scruple to seek its attainment by enlarging the privileges of the people.

Of the alterations which began to take place, during this reign, in the duties, as well as in the constitution of parliament, some notice has already been taken: how far they actually proceeded is, indeed, uncertain; for it would seem, from the irregularity of the supplies from time to time granted, that the three estates, though regularly summoned, voted their subsidies separately. But, however this may be, no doubt can exist, that a decided impulse was then given, which led, at a period somewhat more advanced, to the establishment of the English House of Commons. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that by creating what were termed barons by writ, Edward broke in upon the monopoly which had hitherto existed; and prepared the means of changing the close aristocracy of the peerage into a body capable of being opened as widely as circumstances might require*.

Such was the condition of England, with reference to its laws and political institutions, under the first Edward; a state, if we may so express ourselves, of gradual change,—during which new influences were daily springing up, and working slowly but surely for the benefit of the community at large. A similar spectacle meets us, if we direct our gaze to other, and not less interesting subjects. The English language assumed in this reign its first established character; and the dawn of a national literature began, as it were, to appear in the distant horizon. Symptoms, too, of uneasiness under the trammels of popish tyranny

* This practice was begun by John, and acted upon also by Henry; but it was not till the reign of Edward that it was recognised as legal and constitutional. Many years elapsed, however, ere these peerages by writ became hereditary.

were faintly perceptible,—which acquired, every successive year, additional strength, till they displayed themselves, ere long, not only in the appeals of Wickliffe, but in the more ribald, though little less effective, satires of Chaucer. But it is time to return to the course of my narrative, when I have stated, that Edward had, by his first marriage with Eleanor of Castile, four sons, of whom one only survived him, and eleven daughters. His second wife, Margaret of France, brought him, besides a daughter, who died in her infancy, two sons; Thomas, created earl of Norfolk and mareschal of England, and Edmund, elevated by his brother to the rank of earl of Kent.



Great Seal of Edward the First.

CHAPTER X.

EDWARD THE SECOND.—HIS IMBECILITY.—DISAGREEMENT WITH HIS NOBLES.—DEFEAT AT BANNOCKBURN.—CIVIL BROILS.—HIS DEPOSITION AND DEATH.—EDWARD THE THIRD.—PUNISHES MORTIMER.—HIS WARS WITH SCOTLAND—WITH FRANCE.—BATTLE OF CRESSY.—SIEGE OF CALAIS.—BATTLE OF NEVILLE'S CROSS—OF POICTIERS.—GREAT PLAGUE.—SUCCESS OF THE ENGLISH IN FRANCE.—DEATH OF THE BLACK PRINCE—OF EDWARD THE THIRD.

[A.D. 1307 to A.D. 1377.]

EDWARD had carried with him to the northern border his eldest son, the prince of Wales, whom he enjoined, on his death-bed, to prosecute the war with vigour; so that the Scots might enjoy neither time nor breathing space, till their proud spirits should be broken, and their country conquered. It is even said, that he laid upon his successor the extraordinary injunction, that he should cause the flesh to be separated from his bones, and the bones themselves to be carried at the head of the army whithersoever it might proceed. Be this, however, as it may, the tastes of the young king proved of a more peaceful sort than those of his father, and he paid to the instructions, if given at all, no regard. He sent the body of the deceased monarch to Westminster, where it was interred; and, after a short march into Scotland, returned without striking a blow, disbanded his troops, and repaired to London. There, in the society of one Piers Gaveston, the son of a distinguished Gascon knight, though himself but too much of a buffoon and a parasite, he gave himself up to pleasure, and wasted in idle fêtes the treasures which his father had collected for purposes widely different.

Piers Gaveston, like the generality of mere court-favourites, was not less insolent than rapacious. Instead

of enjoying in quiet the honours and wealth with which his patron loaded him, he seemed to take especial delight in provoking the hostility of the English barons; and did not scruple to treat with indifference, if not with neglect, the Queen Isabella herself. That princess, with whom Edward had by this time completed his marriage, was not of a temper to bear insult lightly. She entered heartily into the intrigues which the nobles had begun to form; and the malecontents appearing in arms at the assembling of parliament, the king found himself unable to resist. The nobles demanded that Gaveston should be expelled the kingdom, to which they compelled him to swear that he would never return; and the king, with an aching heart, sent his favourite as lord-lieutenant to Ireland, where he displayed more of courage and talent than might have been expected from him. But Edward could not long endure the absence of one, in whom his affections appear to have wholly centered. He procured from the Pope the abrogation of Gaveston's vow, softened, as he believed, the animosity of his enemies, and within the short space of eighteen months, the favourite returned to London, more rapacious and not less insolent than ever.

The consequence of all this was a renewal of those discontents, before which Edward had so recently given way. The barons again took arms, and compelling the king to transfer his authority to twelve of their number, introduced into the constitution of the country various changes, some of which, however illegally brought about, must be acknowledged to have been extremely useful. Among these may be enumerated, the ordinances which required that sheriffs should be possessed of a certain share of property, which restrained the custom of purveyance*, put a stop

* The right claimed and exercised by the sovereign, to levy contributions of provisions at will, wherever he went.

to the practice of farming the revenue, and gave to parties aggrieved by vexatious prosecutions, the recompense of damages. But with the barons themselves the main point of all was the enactment of a law which excluded evil counsellors from the king's presence; and which was immediately enforced by the banishment of Gaveston, and the removal of his friends from all offices about the court. Edward consented even to this, though determined, on the first opportunity, to protest against it. He was then permitted to retire to York, whence he sent to Flanders, whither Gaveston had withdrawn, an order for the favourite's recall. Obedience to that order proved fatal to the Gascon. He came: a sort of civil war ensued; and being taken, on capitulation, in the fort of Scarborough, he was conveyed to the castle of Deddington, near Banbury, and there put to death. The fall of Gaveston put an end, for a while to the jealousies of the barons, and their animosity towards the king. The powers which they had formerly assumed were relaxed, and matters being replaced on their ancient footing, the attention of all ranks began to turn to the state of Scotland. There the supineness of his enemies had contributed, not less than his own valour, to advance the fortunes of Robert Bruce. He recovered fortress after fortress; reduced the disaffected among the Scottish nobles, gained over the wavering to his cause, and inspired his followers with indomitable courage. Of all the strong-holds, indeed, into which Edward the First had thrown garrisons, Berwick and Stirling Castle alone held out; and even the latter, Sir Philip de Mowbray, its governor, stood pledged to surrender, in the event of his receiving no relief prior to a certain day. The king, who on previous occasions had more than once begun and relinquished an invasion, determined now to act with becoming vigour; and having drawn together an army of which the numbers are stated to have

exceeded one hundred thousand men, he passed the border and advanced towards Stirling.

Aware of the coming storm, and not blind to its magnitude, Bruce used every exertion to repel it. He assembled thirty thousand chosen warriors on a position near the village of Bannockburn; and, leaving the southern counties undefended, made ready to strike there for his crown and his life. About noon, on the 23rd of June, 1314, the English forces appeared, moving in dense masses, and covering their columns, as was the custom of the times, by a magnificent array of chivalry. Bruce watched them attentively, till he beheld on the left of his own line a cloud of dust, through which, at intervals, the flash of bright armour burst forth. He knew, from the motion of the dust, that a manœuvre was in the act of execution; and as the morrow was the last day which Mowbray could claim of respite, he guessed, not unfairly, that a relief was in march upon Stirling. Randolph, earl of Murray, his friend and nephew, had the watch in that quarter, and felt, when appealed to by Bruce, "that a rose had fallen from his chaplet." He determined to recover it, or perish; so he pushed, with a few score of spearmen, to intercept the enemy, and threw himself directly in their way. A fierce encounter took place, which, in spite of an extraordinary disparity of numbers, (the English mustered eight hundred horse, the Scots but eighty infantry,) ended in the repulse of the assailants. Not long afterwards, Bruce himself, while examining the dispositions of his field of battle, was charged by an English knight, named Sir Henry Bohun. Bruce being mounted only on a palfrey, avoided the shock, but striking at his enemy as he passed with a battle-axe, he dashed helmet and head to pieces, and laid Bohun dead at his feet. The effect produced upon the Scottish troops by these two affairs was of the most animating nature. When the dawn of next day came

in, they resumed their ranks in the highest possible spirits, and after solemnly recommending themselves to the protection of the Most High, stood to receive the charge.

Bruce, like an able general, had laboured to compensate for his inferiority in point of numbers, by making the most of a field admirably adapted to his purposes. He rested the right of his army upon the rocky bed of the Bannock, and strengthened his left by digging numerous pits, which he filled with sharp stakes to the depth of three feet, and covered over loosely with turf. In his front line he placed his spearmen, the best and bravest of his infantry; while he himself kept in hand, as a reserve, four hundred chosen cavalry, an arm in which the Scots were even proverbially weak. His archers, in every respect inferior to those of England, he distributed under cover of the thickets, and supported them with billmen, a hardy race, drawn generally from the Highlands. The English, on the other hand, trusting mainly to their heavy horse, appear to have adopted few precautionary measures. The yeomen were neither supported by cavalry, nor covered, as they ought to have been, by chevaux-de-frise, while spears and bills, huddled indiscriminately together, threatened the whole front of the enemy's position, and blocked up their own manœuvring ground. The consequence was, that when the men at arms charged, and fell, as Bruce had anticipated, into irretrievable confusion, there was neither an efficient reserve on which they could retire, nor space enough given to rally. They became mingled with their foot, while the yeomen, taken in flank by Bruce with his chosen squadrons, perished to a man where they stood. All became, in a brief space, confusion and dismay, which the sudden appearance of the Scottish camp-followers, over the elbow of a neighbouring hill, augmented to a fivefold degree. Bruce saw, and

took advantage of the crisis. He led his line to the charge, and obtained, with comparatively trifling loss, the greatest victory which ever crowned the efforts of a Scottish army, in its numerous struggles with the English.

From the field of Bannockburn, Edward fled to Berwick, which he reached without having once drawn bridle. His loss was prodigious, and the disgrace attaching to it affected him with profound melancholy: yet he found at home no sources of consolation; for the barons, taking advantage of the low state of his fortunes, again made war upon the prerogative, and succeeded for awhile in exercising all the authority of the state. It was to no purpose that he made appeals to their national honour, when the Scots ravaged Cumberland and Durham, and threatened even Yorkshire itself with devastation. More intent upon establishing their own authority, than vindicating the renown of their country, they opposed to these incursions a very feeble resistance; if, indeed, they abstained from more decided acts of treason than mere negligence for the most part brings about. The result was, that Edward concluded a truce with Scotland for the space of twelve years, on conditions highly favourable to the weaker party, who had failed to make themselves masters of the important colony of Ireland, only through the rashness of Edward, the chivalrous brother of Robert Bruce.

Incapable of guiding his own steps, and disgusted with all that passed around him, Edward sought consolation in the society of a new favourite, and selected, as the object of that dangerous honour, Hugh le Despenser, a young Englishman, of noble birth and pleasing manners. In the age of which I am now writing, the office of a prime-minister was unknown. A body of illiterate barons could not understand that to one of their number the king might safely depute his powers; and that

to deal with the peer in matters of general government was, in fact, to screen the monarchy from hazard, while it secured the rights and liberties of the subject. It would seem, moreover, that the individuals selected, at least by Edward the Second, to fill under him offices of trust, were possessed of no other qualifications than those which float upon the surface; for Le Despenser, like Gaveston, is said to have abused his master's confidence in the same degree in which he wounded the feelings of his equals. Like Gaveston, he soon stirred up a powerful party against himself; among whom the queen Isabella was numbered; and an appeal in this case, as in that which preceded it, was at once made to arms. At first the king's party largely prevailed. The earl of Lancaster, the leader of the malecontents, being defeated at Boroughbridge, was taken and executed; while many others of high rank suffered the penalties of attainder, and went into banishment. The inconsiderate partiality of the king, however, who bestowed the mass of the forfeited estates upon his favourite, stirred up fresh enemies in all quarters; and the queen, Isabella, giving countenance to the intrigue, a new and more perilous contest ensued. Isabella repaired to the court of her brother Charles, under the pretext of settling certain differences which had arisen, touching the claims of the French monarch on the duke of Guienne. She was there joined by Roger Mortimer, Lord Wigmore, a powerful young noble, who had effected his escape from the Tower of London, and she concerted with him measures for the deposition of her husband, and the elevation of her son Edward, then a youth of thirteen. I have nothing to say in defence of the motives which more immediately swayed her. They could not possibly be deserving of praise; for whatever may be the faults of a father and a husband, the son and the wife are the last individuals in the world from whom punishment ought to come; but, however this may be,

she put herself at the head of an army, and required of Edward that he would dismiss all unworthy persons from his counsels. There was no mistaking the import of that demand, and the king prepared to resist it. He found the Londoners exceedingly lukewarm, and repaired to the west, but even there his reception was the reverse of cordial. The queen made good her landing, took Bristol after a short siege, made herself mistress of the person of the elder Le Despenser, whom she sent immediately to execution; and drove Edward to seek his safety in a flight to Ireland, which the inclemency of the season interrupted. Finally young Le Despenser was taken, and put to death, under circumstances of marked cruelty,—while Edward himself, having been compelled to surrender, was led in triumph to the capital. A formal sentence of deposition soon followed, and the unhappy monarch, being stripped of all his honours, was committed, as a state-prisoner, to the care



Great Seal of Edward the Second.

deeds or their object, he was tried by a slavish parliament, and found guilty of treason. His lands, as well as those of the great family of Spenser, Mortimer unblushingly appropriated to his own use.

The young king had by this time attained the age of eighteen, and having been presented by his wife, Philippa of Hainault, with a son, regarded himself as fully competent to hold the reins of government. He therefore felt acutely the restraints to which he was made subject, and opened his mind at last to the Lord Montacute, one of the most bitter, though secret enemies of Mortimer. It was concerted between them, that during the session of a parliament which had been summoned to meet at Nottingham, an attempt should be made to seize the tyrant's person. But Mortimer having been led to suspect that some such scheme was in progress, the confederates found that ample precautions were taken to defeat it. Mortimer, though he had strictly prohibited the barons from leading to Nottingham their own retainers, repaired thither himself at the head of an army, and took possession of the castle, of which the gates were closed every night, and the keys carried to the queen's apartment. It became necessary, under such circumstances, either to abandon the project altogether, or to extend the sphere of confidence more widely; and the conspirators, if such they may be designated, regardless of the hazard incurred, adopted the latter course. Sir William Eland, the governor, was intrusted with their secret; and he, in his turn, pointing out to them a subterraneous passage through the rock, they experienced no difficulty in introducing a body of armed men into Mortimer's chamber. Two knights fell in a fruitless effort to defend him; nor did the tears and remonstrances of the queen avail. He was carried before the same judges who had so recently sentenced the earl of Kent to suffer death, and being condemned without the examination of a single

witness, was led to immediate execution. With respect, again, to the queen, of whose participation in the crimes of her favourite no doubt could be entertained, she received at the hands of her son more merciful treatment. She was kept, during the remainder of her life, a sort of prisoner at large on her manor of Risings, an annual allowance of four thousand pounds being granted for her maintenance.

For the space of six years which succeeded the fall of Mortimer, Edward was chiefly occupied in an attempt to restore the line of Baliol to the Scottish throne, and to re-establish the supremacy of England over her hardy neighbours. It would appear, indeed, that he embarked in these enterprises not without considerable misgiving, for he had himself ratified the peace which was concluded during his minority, and consented to the union of his sister Jane with David, the infant son and successor of Robert Bruce. But the moral restraints which are held binding in the intercourse of private life, exercise, for the most part, but an imperfect control in state-affairs; and Edward found himself unable to resist the twofold temptation which his ambition, and the undisguised wishes of his people, threw in his way. When Baliol, who with unaccountable celerity had carved his way to the Scottish throne, became, within the brief space of three months, a fugitive, Edward did not refuse the aid which, as a vassal, he craved of his chief. He marched across the border, laid siege to Berwick, and defeating the regent, Sir Archibald Douglas, in a great battle on Halidon Hill, reduced the whole country to submission. But the facility with which Baliol yielded to the demands of his ally, including the dismemberment of Scotland itself, and the annexation of its richest provinces to England, stirred up a spirit of uncompromising hatred, which no future exertions could allay. So long as Edward and his English chivalry kept the

field, the Scots yielded a forced allegiance; whenever they withdrew, a thousand standards were raised, and crowds of patriots gathered around them. Thus was a continual war of skirmishes carried on, without any important result being produced,—till other and more gigantic undertakings drew off the attention of Edward, and left Scotland to resume her place among the nations of Europe.

In the year 1314, Philip the Fourth of France, surnamed the Fair, expired, leaving three sons, Louis, Philip, and Charles, all of whom, within the short space of fourteen years, came to the throne, and all died without issue. Two competitors now appeared for the vacant crown, namely, Edward of England and Philip of Valois, of whom the former claimed as grandson of Philip the Fourth, by his daughter Isabella; the latter, as grandson to Philip the Third, by his son Charles of Valois. At the demise of Louis, in 1316, it had been decided that females could not succeed to the French crown; in consequence of which Jane, his daughter, had been set aside, and the throne occupied by Philip. Edward, however, while he gave up the rights of the female, a concession to which it might have been a hard matter to force him by legal argument, insisted, that his mother's disqualification did not extend to himself; inasmuch as it could be regarded as personal only, because occasioned by the admitted inability of a woman to head an army, and preside in councils of state. The question was referred to the peers and judges of France, who decided in favour of Philip; and Edward so far consented to the decision, that he did homage to his rival as duke of Guienne, at first in general terms, but latterly in the accustomed manner.

Had there been no war with Scotland it is more than probable that Edward's claims upon the crown of France would never have been revived. Philip, how-

ever, by granting an asylum to the infant Bruce, and steadily refusing to withdraw it, provoked the hostility of his fiery neighbour, whose ambition was, in due time, roused by the suggestions of Robert of Artois, an outlaw from his own country, of which Philip had taken possession. The readiness with which his parliaments entered into the king's extravagant views, cannot fail to strike with astonishment the modern reader. They voted him large supplies, urged him to prosecute his rights, and gave their sanction, such as it was, to the many continental alliances, which he began without loss of time to contract, and for which he paid heavily.

Edward engaged as his supporters in the impending struggle, Louis of Bavaria, emperor of Germany, the dukes of Brabant and Gueldres, the archbishop of Cologne, the marquess of Juliers, the counts of Hainault and Namur, and other personages of inferior power. He hired the services of almost every adventurer who could bring half-a-dozen armed men into the field, and contracted the closest intimacy with Jacob Von Artaveldt, a brewer of Ghent, who had established democratic parties in all the opulent cities of Flanders, and exercised, by their means, the most despotic authority. Philip, in like manner, who saw the storm gathering, sought to fortify himself against its fury. He applied for, and obtained, the co-operation of the kings of Navarre and Bohemia, the dukes of Bretagne, Austria, and Lorraine, the palatine of the Rhine, and most of the petty princes of Germany. Yet were the results of this armament, in which more than one-half of the sovereigns of Europe took part, insignificant in the extreme. In his first campaign, Edward laid waste a narrow tract of open country, formed the siege of Cambray, which he found it necessary to relinquish, and faced his rival at Vêranfosse, without striking a blow. His second commenced, indeed, with a brilliant naval victory, the first which, as a nation, England had yet

obtained, but ended, after a formal assumption of the title of king, in a truce, concluded under the walls of Fontenay, at the instigation of the Pope, and the entreaties of the king's mother-in-law, Jane of Hainault.

Abortive as these exertions were, they served utterly to exhaust the king's resources, who returned home in no very kindly humour, and became immediately involved in disputes with his parliament. These ended in the vindication of their rights by the peers, who screened the primate and the bishops of Chichester and Lichfield from a prosecution in the Court of Exchequer, and established the principle, that no peer could be arraigned, or brought to judgment in any case, except in parliament and before his fellows. With the convocation of the clergy, also, Edward embroiled himself,—for that body had warmly espoused the cause of the prelates, and scarcely disguised their design of fulminating against the sovereign the terrible sentence of excommunication. Yet the king contrived, by the exercise of consummate address, to overcome all his difficulties, serious as they appeared to be: He even prevailed upon the parliament to revoke its obnoxious decree, on a pledge given by himself, that its spirit should be observed; and finding a fresh road of ingress into the heart of France open, he applied for, and obtained, new grants, in order that he might take advantage of it.

It is by no means improbable, that the failure of two campaigns, succeeded as they were by a peace between the emperor and the king of France, might have operated to wean Edward from his attachment to continental alliances, had not the death, without issue, of John the Third, duke of Bretagne, brought him again, though under novel circumstances, into collision with his rival. The vacant coronet being claimed by two parties; on one hand by John, the earl of Montfort, the youngest and only surviving brother of

the duke; on the other, by Charles de Blois, nephew to the king of France, in right of his wife Jane, the daughter of Guy, an elder brother,—it was natural that the latter should seek and find a ready supporter in his relative, the French monarch; and scarcely less so, that the former should appeal for assistance to the king of England. For a while the tide of fortune ran strongly in favour of Philip of Blois. Bretagne was overrun by French troops, De Montfort himself was made prisoner, and a woman and an infant son were left to uphold a cause, which might well be accounted as desperate. But Isabella, a high-minded princess, was far from yielding to fortune. She took her infant in her arms, went forth to address her knights, and threw herself on their generosity; an appeal which, in the best days of chivalry, could not be resisted. They swore to die in her defence, and they held out Hennebion, almost the last place of arms that owned her sway, until a long-promised and tardy relief came from England. The war, however, continued to languish, in spite of the gallantry of Sir Edward Manny, a brave knight, who greatly distinguished himself in various encounters,—till the earl of Derby, having landed at Bayonne, with a force composed entirely of English yeomen and men at arms, recovered, by dint of courage and conduct, almost the whole of Guienne. It was then that Edward, after a fruitless attempt to place his son, the illustrious Black Prince, on the throne of Flanders*, resolved to strike a great blow at the heart of France; and landing near La Hogue, in Normandy, with an army of thirty thousand men, carried fire and sword up to the gates of Paris.

Nothing daunted by the boldness of his enemy's proceedings, Philip drew together two powerful armies,

* This attempt cost the life of the king's ally Artaveldt, who, espousing the prince's cause, provoked the hostility of his fellow-citizens, and perished in a tumult.

one of which, under the duke of Normandy, he opposed to Derby in the south, while he himself marched, at the head of the other, to relieve the capital. It does not appear that Edward at this time seriously contemplated the reduction of Paris. His plan seems rather to have embraced certain objects, less brilliant perhaps, but scarcely less important, namely, a strong diversion in Derby's favour, and the capture of Calais, by a rapid countermarch. But Philip chose his ground with so much skill, and threw so many obstacles in the way, that to execute the latter of these projects, as had been originally proposed, proved impracticable. Wherever he marched, Edward found the bridges broken down on the rivers, and fords and defiles so strictly guarded, that it was not without severe fighting that he once or twice forced a passage. After a campaign of manœuvres, however, which would have done no discredit to later times, he contrived to elude the vigilance of the enemy, and crossing the Somme, gained upon them a twelve hours' progress, with an open route before him as far as Crotois on the coast. But it was not his design to abandon the country without trying the fortune of a battle. He proceeded, therefore, to examine with the utmost care the military features of the surrounding districts, and finding, near the village of Cressy, a position well adapted both to the amount and nature of his forces, he resolved there to measure himself with his pursuer.

On the 26th of June, the English army drew up in the rear of the village, on the slope of a gentle eminence, having its flanks secured partly by wood, partly by intrenchments, and its front covered by a broken and difficult country. It was formed in three lines, of which the first was commanded by the Prince of Wales, then a youth of fifteen years of age, and under him by the earls of Warwick, Oxford, and Harcourt, and the lords Chandos, Holland, and other noblemen. The

second obeyed the orders of the earls of Arundel and Northampton, with the lords Willoughby, Basset, Roos, and Sir Lewis Tufton; while the third Edward kept under his own immediate control, to be used as emergencies should arise, in support of the others. In advance of all stood the archers, arrayed in the form of a portcullis,—a disposition which gave to each man space enough for the use of his weapon, at the same time that it enabled the mass to watch the gorges of the various lanes and roads, by which the crest of the position was approached and traversed. Finally, a few pieces of cannon, cumbrous in shape, and therefore inefficient in operation, were planted upon a rising ground, whence they could throw their shot over the heads of the line, and plunge into the centre of any long column which might threaten it. Such were the dispositions of Edward; nor did a great while elapse, ere their utility was put to the test.

Philip of France had passed the night of the 25th in the town of Abbeville; he quitted it at an early hour on the following morning, at the head of one hundred and twenty thousand men. His march was a long and toilsome one, and it was conducted with very little regularity. The consequence was, that when, at the suggestion of his ablest officers, he would have halted to refresh his troops, the impetuosity of the nobles set his commands at defiance; and men and horses, alike spent with toil, were hurried without plan or arrangement into battle. An attempt was, indeed, made to distribute the army into three lines, and a body of fifteen thousand Genoese cross-bowmen were planted in its front; but the intervals between the lines appear to have been very imperfectly defined, and still less perfectly preserved. To complete the misfortunes of the French, a severe thunder-storm came on, which moistening the strings of the cross-bows, rendered them comparatively useless; while the English

yeomen, keeping their weapons in their cases, drew them out tight, and in admirable condition, when required. The skirmish, therefore, with which the battle began, was soon decided in favour of the English. The Genoese fell back in confusion; and were immediately charged and dispersed by the men at arms, who drove through them for the purpose of bringing the affair at once to stroke of hand.

I have said, that Edward's position could be approached in front only through a few hollow roads, the sides of which were feathered with hedges and rows of trees. Behind these the archers had stationed themselves, and plied with a furious discharge the knights and squires, who rode fiercely to meet their fate. Down they came, men and horses, till the dead and the dying choked up the way; and the mass of each column became immovable, by reason of the check in front and the pressure from behind. It was at this juncture that the Black Prince (so called from the colour of his armour,) put himself at the head of a thousand men at arms, and making a *détour*, so as to pass through the open woods on the right, came down upon the flank of the French cavalry at a gallop. The confusion of the French became greater than ever. They lost all confidence, broke and fled; till a strong reinforcement coming up under Philip in person, the tide was rolled back again, and the battle became more fierce than before. Now was the Black Prince, in his turn, hemmed in, in spite of the prompt arrival of Arundel and Northampton to his aid, and for some time the issue of the *mêlée* appeared more than doubtful. Yet was Edward firm in his determination not to hazard his reserve, till all hope of victory should be abandoned. To an urgent entreaty for succour he made this reply: "Is my son dead?" and when an answer was given in the negative, he added, "I will send no aid. Let the boy win his spurs; for to him and his brave compa-

nions the honour of this day shall be reserved." Such a message operated upon the courage of the English warriors far more effectually than a strong reinforcement could have done. They set up a shout, charged the enemy with redoubled ardour, and overthrew them on all hands with prodigious slaughter.

It was now dark, for an arrow had not been discharged till nearly six o'clock in the evening; and the French, but imperfectly arrayed at the beginning, fell into total confusion, all endeavours to remedy which proved useless. The bravest and most skilful of their leaders were, moreover, slain; yet the king still struggled to continue the fight, from which he was removed at last by John of Hainault, who seized his bridle, and rode with him from the field. The English, however, did not venture, during the night, to quit the position which they occupied. But when the dawn came in, and they beheld the wreck of their enemies scattered about in broken squadrons on the field, they renewed with double impetuosity, what deserves thenceforth to be called a ruthless, because an unresisted massacre. Upwards of six-and-thirty thousand of Philip's followers died in that action, including twelve hundred knights, fourteen hundred gentlemen, two crowned heads, the kings of Bohemia and Majorca, and the flower of the nobility of France; while the loss of the English amounted only to three knights, one esquire, and a few hundreds of inferior rank. It is worthy of record, that the crest of the fallen king of Bohemia, three ostrich-feathers, together with his motto, "*Ich Dien*," (I serve,) was assumed by the prince of Wales; and has been worn ever since by his successors, in memory of this great event.

The victory of Cressy rendered the execution of Edward's further plan of campaign comparatively easy. He marched upon Calais, to which he laid siege, and after a close investment of eleven months, reduced it

by famine. It was on this occasion that the self-devotion of six individuals, of whom one only, Eustace de St. Pierre, has left his name on record, saved their fellow-citizens from the extremities which usually accompany the capture of a town by assault. They came forth with halters round their necks, a willing sacrifice to Edward's indignation, though their lives were spared, ostensibly at the entreaty of the queen; more, perhaps, at the dictation of sound policy.

In the meanwhile, the war raged with great fury in Guienne, where the gallant earl of Derby continued to perform prodigies of valour, in spite of the pressure of the duke of Toulouse, and an overwhelming force of one hundred thousand men. The Scots, too, became restless, and, stirred up by Philip of France, marched, under their young king, David, a numerous army across the border. After ravaging a large portion of Cumberland, David directed his course towards Durham, where he committed many outrages, in the full assurance that England, denuded of its chivalry, could offer no resistance. But David was mistaken. Philippa, the queen, assembled a force, which she placed under the command of the archbishop of York, with the lords Henry Percy and Ralph Neville, and exhorted, in the name of God and St. George, to defend the realm. The troops nobly responded to the call. On the 17th of October, they engaged the Scots on a favourable position at Neville's Cross, and, principally through the superior excellence of their archery, totally defeated them. Fifteen thousand Scotchmen fell in that battle; the king, with several of his most distinguished nobles, being made prisoners.

The result of so many victories, achieved at a prodigious expense of blood and treasure, was to leave the realm of England in a state of exhaustion, and to reconcile the king to the conclusion of an armistice;

which might lead, as was hoped, to a permanent peace. An unsuccessful attempt to surprise Calais, on the part of an Italian knight in the service of the king of France, scarcely interrupted this negotiation, which went on under the auspices of the Pope, not unfrequently the advocate of peace among princes. But, scarcely had the sword ceased to crave its victims, when another and a still more fearful scourge over-spread the land.

Coming from the east, and holding a westerly direction, that great plague swept over the whole of Europe, where it destroyed no inconsiderable portion of the inhabitants, and struck the survivors with such dismay that there arose among them the wildest sects of fanatics. Of these, the flagellants, or whippers, were the most remarkable, though they made few converts in England; for the discipline which they inflicted one upon another, was not such as to captivate the imagination of a people proverbially careful of their persons. Nevertheless, even this gloomy interval was not without its gaieties and amusements. While his subjects were perishing by thousands, Edward instituted the order of the garter, into which, only five-and-twenty members were admitted; and which has ever since continued to be, in the hands of the king of England, a cheap, yet satisfactory mode, of rewarding the services of his most illustrious servants.

Edward had by this time awakened from his dream of ambition, and desired nothing more earnestly than to accommodate his differences with France. He offered to renounce all claim to the throne, provided he were allowed to retain in absolute sovereignty the provinces of which he was in possession. But though John, the successor of Philip, appeared willing to make the concession, his nobles resolutely condemned it; and in 1355 the flames of war were again kindled. On that occasion, the Black Prince led one army from Bour-

deaux, which committed terrible havoc in the south; while Edward himself laid waste the country from Calais as far as his scanty supplies would enable him to proceed.

Meanwhile the Scots again flew to arms, surprised Berwick, and pushed successful forays into Cumberland and Northumberland; a movement which induced the king to take the field against them in person, and to aim at their final subjugation. He did not succeed. Like his grandfather, he overran the open country, and received the homage of a few traitors; but the nation, true to itself, held out, and he was forced to return, for lack of subsistence. It was to no purpose that he obtained from Baliol a formal renunciation of rights which the Scottish people had never recognised. Neither that act, nor the treasonable weakness of David, who entered with too much readiness into his views, availed him anything. The Scots were determined that an English prince should not rule over them, and they made the determination good.

While Edward himself was occupied with these matters, the Black Prince conducted a second expedition into the fertile provinces of Querci, Limousin, Auvergne, and Berri. He had collected immense booty, and was on his return to Bourdeaux, when, at a village called Maupertuis, about five miles from Poitiers, he discovered that the king of France was in possession of his only road of communication. The prince's army mustered about twelve thousand men; the enemy were upwards of sixty thousand strong; a prodigious inferiority, for which, in our day, scarcely any skill could compensate. Yet the recollections of Cressy so inspirited both him and his people, that they prepared, without hesitation, to give battle. The prince formed his line to great advantage, among vineyards and other enclosures, where the plateau could be reached, as at

Cressy, only through a narrow lane. That day, however, not a sword was drawn. The cardinal of Perigord interfered; and so conscious was the prince of his perilous situation, that he offered his prisoners, his booty, and a pledge not to serve for seven years, as the price of a safe retreat. But John would accept of nothing less than the surrender of the prince himself, whom, with one hundred of his noblest knights, he hoped to exchange for Calais. Edward accordingly directed his people to cover their flanks by temporary intrenchments, and having posted in ambush a body of three hundred men-at-arms, with as many archers, whom he instructed to charge the enemy in the rear while engaged, he commended himself to the protection of Heaven, and waited for the dawn.

The battle of Poitiers resembled, in most of its features, the glorious action at Cressy. Again the French chivalry rode fearless into a hollow road, and again they were cut to pieces by an unerring discharge of arrows. They recoiled upon their line, and threw it into confusion, which a rapid and masterly attack from the ambuscade soon converted into a flight. It was to no purpose that John strove to rally his squadrons. He was himself attacked by a compact band of knights, who beat down his attendants, and pressed upon himself; and he was compelled at last, after a gallant resistance, to surrender. The Black Prince, in the meanwhile, after clearing the field, had ordered a tent to be pitched, into which he retired, weary with fighting, when intelligence was conveyed to him that the king of France was taken, and that his life was not safe, in consequence of the rivalry of those who disputed the honour of his capture. He despatched the earl of Warwick, with instructions to conduct the royal prisoner to his presence; and he hurried forth to meet and to exhibit towards him every mark of respect. John was nobly entertained. His conqueror would not

so much as sit at table, but stood behind his chair, and waited upon him like a menial. It was a rare instance of generosity in dealing with a vanquished foe, and it produced the best effects upon the conduct of others towards their captives. The French knights were received by the victors as brothers, and liberated on the payment of a very moderate ransom.

The return of the Black Prince to Bourdeaux, after this splendid victory, was not only secure but triumphant. His force was not, however, adequate to an immediate prosecution of his conquests, so he concluded a truce for two years, and repaired with his royal prisoner to London. The greatest joy prevailed there, not unmingled with commiseration for the fate of a prince whom the chances of war had reduced to so humiliating a condition. John had, therefore, no reason to complain of his treatment. He was welcomed with every demonstration of respect; and, during many years of captivity, continued to experience such treatment as the high-minded victor is accustomed to bestow upon a defeated but honourable enemy. In the mean time, however, his ill-fated kingdom suffered all the distresses incident on a state of complete anarchy. He had himself sown the seeds of these evils, by casting the king of Navarre into prison; and his son, the dauphin, a youth of eighteen years of age, possessed neither ability nor influence enough to remove them. Yet Edward found himself incapacitated from turning the circumstance to account. Besides that the terms of the truce restrained him, his resources were entirely exhausted: nor was it till the dauphin had in some degree restored order, that he was in a condition to renew the war. This was done, after the failure of a negotiation to which John had assented, but which the states of France refused to ratify. But it led to nothing more than a predatory excursion as far as the environs of Paris, after which a treaty was signed, which restored

John to freedom, and left Edward master of several valuable provinces in the south, as well as of Calais, Guisnes, Montreuil, and the county of Ponthieu, in the north of France. One article of this treaty John found himself unable to fulfil: he could not raise the sum of three hundred thousand crowns of gold, and he preferred to the loss of honour returning to London, and dying a captive in a foreign land.

For a brief space there was peace between the rival crowns; and the Black Prince, who was created duke of Aquitaine, governed with singular wisdom his father's dominions in the south of France. In an evil hour, however, the spirit of chivalry induced him to espouse the quarrel of Peter, king of Castile; whom his subjects, supported by a band of mercenaries under the guidance of a brave knight, Bertrand du Guesclin, had expelled, on account of his cruelty, from the throne. The prince marched into Castile, and obtained a brilliant victory, which restored his worthless protégé to power; but, being refused the pay for which he had stipulated, found himself under the necessity, on his return, of imposing several obnoxious taxes upon the people. Serious discontents were the consequence, of which Charles of France took advantage, by summoning the Prince of Wales to appear at his court, and answer to the complaints that were lodged against him. The prince replied, that he would come, but that it would be at the head of sixty thousand men; and issued immediate orders to enrol an army. But his own health had suffered so much during the Spanish campaign, that he was unable to lead it, and the best of his lieutenants were unfortunately slain or taken in the first campaign. Town after town accordingly fell; till at last there remained to England, of the extensive conquests which she had made, only the cities of Bourdeaux and Bayonne, with Calais, in the north, and the trifling territory dependent on it.

Edward felt acutely the loss of his transmarine dominions, to secure which he had renounced all claim upon Scotland; but his grief on that account was but as dust in the balance, when compared with his sorrow at the untimely decease of his son. After lingering many months, the illustrious Black Prince expired in Canterbury, on the 8th of June, 1376, amid the universal lamentations of the English people, and the inconsolable regret of his father. Nor did Edward himself long survive the blow. From the day of the prince's death he became an altered man; he withdrew himself from business, strove to drown his sorrows in the society of unworthy favourites, and, finally, gave up the ghost, neglected by his very mistress, on the 21st of June, 1377.

Edward the Third died in the 65th year of his age, after a long and prosperous reign, which extended over not less than half a century. He left behind him the character of a great warrior and an able prince; for his conquests, though they scarcely survived the hand that wrought them, served to elevate the character of the English people, to enlarge their views, and give consistency to their energies. In civil life, moreover, he was the patron of many useful arts. He rendered Windsor Castle what it was prior to the additions of George the Fourth's age; gave an impulse to the Gothic style in churches; built Westminster Hall, and the chamber in which the House of Commons used to assemble previous to the late fire. How far his policy had the effect of extending the commerce of his country, may be doubted, but that he sought that end no one can hesitate to admit, who examines his proceedings with an unprejudiced eye. In his reign the parliament, and especially the House of Commons, acquired great additional powers. He found it necessary to carry the representatives of the people along with him; and he bribed them to grant supplies by increasing their

authority: yet he scrupled not, as often as his own convenience required, to set their decisions aside, as is shown by their repeated remonstrances, and his frequent ratifications of the Great Charter. It is worthy of remark, moreover, that under him the French language ceased to be used in the courts of law; and that the tax to the See of Rome, which John had granted, was abolished. The symptoms of a decided hostility to Popish usurpation were, indeed, manifold; for Wycliffe began to preach, and Chaucer wrote, in this reign. Nor is it going too far to assume, that the seeds of that Reformation which bore fruit in Henry's time, were even then sown. But that which particularly distinguishes his era from those which preceded it, is the decided change for the better which occurred in the mode of administering justice. Not to dwell upon the Statute of Treason, for which England is indebted to her third Edward, we need only refer to the declarations of Sir Matthew Hale, who says generally, that "under this reign the law was improved to its greatest height; and the judges and pleaders were very learned. The pleadings are more polished than those in the time of Edward the Second; yet they have neither uncertainty, prolixity, nor obscurity. So that at the latter part of this king's reign, the law seemed to be near its meridian."

Edward the Third left behind him a numerous offspring of both sexes. His eldest son died, as has been stated, leaving one son, the heir to the crown. The rest survived their father, namely, Lionel, duke of Clarence; John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster; Edward, duke of York; and Thomas, duke of Gloucester. Clarence left, at his decease, but one daughter, who espoused Edward Mortimer, earl of Marche, while Lancaster was the head of that family, which by and by came into possession of the throne. The names of Edward's daughters were Isabella, Joan, Mary, and Margaret, of

whom it is unnecessary to say more, than that they all married according to their rank.



Great Seal of Edward the Third.

CHAPTER XI

RICHARD THE SECOND.—POPULAR REBELLION.—WAT TYLER.—THE KING'S COURAGE.—HIS WEAKNESS.—MURDER OF THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.—GENERAL DISCONTENTS.—THE DUKE OF HEREFORD.—HIS BANISHMENT.—RETURNS.—RICHARD DEPOSED AND MURDERED.—HENRY THE FOURTH THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER.—LINEAGE OF THE HOUSE OF YORK.—REBELLIIONS.—BATTLE OF SHREWSBURY.—OWEN GLENDOWER.—AFFAIRS OF FRANCE.—THE KING'S DEATH.—MISCELLANEOUS TRANSACTIONS.

[A. D. 1377 to A. D. 1413.]

RICHARD OF BOURDEAUX, so called from the place of his birth, was raised to the throne in the eleventh year of his age. His predecessor, though he fixed the order of succession, had taken no care to provide a regency; and it became the business of the parliament to supply the deficiency. So much of rivalry, however, prevailed among the king's uncles, that to give an open preference to one over the rest would have led to mischief; so the Lords and Commons contented themselves with naming a council of nine, by whom the affairs of the crown should be managed, as it were, in departments. Among these Lancaster took care that a majority of his own creatures should be included; by which means, though he escaped the odium which might have attached to a more conspicuous station, he wielded for a time the whole power of the state.

It was stated above, that the popular branch of the legislature obtained a great accession to its influence during the reign of Edward the Third. The first measures of the House of Commons, after the accession of Richard, exhibited a determination rather to extend than to curtail these privileges; for that body, besides petitioning for various rights, chose a speaker, an officer

of whom no previous notice is taken. It was not, however, among the members of the House of Commons alone that a disposition to curtail the power of the barons manifested itself. Following the example of the populace in Flanders and in France, where serious insurrections had taken place, the villains and artisans of England began to murmur at their condition, which they were industriously taught to regard as unnatural, by one John Ball, an itinerant preacher of sedition, rather than of the Gospel. It was at this juncture that the parliament, now pressed by the exigencies of an expensive war, passed an act for levying a capitation-tax on all persons, except common beggars, who should have passed the age of fifteen. As the sum required from the peasant was precisely the same as that demanded from the peer, the former was fully justified in complaining; and the farmers (for in those days all taxes were farmed out) experienced considerable difficulty in collecting their dues. In an evil hour one of their agents, while seeking to promote the interests of his employer, forgot what was due to common decency, and offered to the daughter of a tiler of Dartford intolerable indignities. He was instantly felled by a blow from her father's hammer. There needed only some such accident as this to excite throughout the country a general revolt. The people ran to arms, and placing the tiler at their head, who assumed the name of Wat Tyler, they marched, to the number of sixty thousand men, upon London. But they moved not alone. Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Sussex, rose at the cry of the men of Kent, and London became invested on all sides by an infuriated mob. Nor was this a mere ebullition of popular discontent, in which the passions, not the reason, of those engaged take part. The peasants set forth certain claims, of which it is impossible to deny the justice, while their extreme moderation excites our surprise. They re-

quired that slavery should be abolished; that lands should be held on rent; that all men should possess the liberty of buying and selling at fairs and markets; and that a general pardon should be extended to themselves and their abettors. Richard readily promised to grant their requests, and gave to the several companies, into which they were divided, written charters; nevertheless, the insurrection was not quelled without bloodshed. The mob broke into the Tower, put to death the chancellor, and other officers of state, burned the palace of the Savoy, belonging to the duke of Lancaster, and committed upon many of the peaceable inhabitants of London horrid excesses.

While these things were going on, the king, slenderly attended, met in Smithfield a numerous company of rioters, of whom Wat Tyler was at the head. He entered into conversation with Wat Tyler, who advanced boldly into the midst of the royal escort, and commanded, at the same time, his followers to keep aloof, till he should give a signal of advance. During the progress of the conference, Tyler played with the hilt of his dagger, and at last put forth his hand to grasp the king's bridle, upon which Walworth, the mayor of London, stabbed him in the neck with a short sword, and grievously wounded him. The rioter turned, but fell from his horse, and was despatched where he lay by one of the king's esquires. A serious tumult had well-nigh ensued, for the people sprang forward, and bent their bows to avenge his death when the king, with singular presence of mind, rode towards them, and placed himself in their front. "What mean ye by this disorder, my good people?" exclaimed he. "Are ye angry that ye have lost your leader? I am your king; I will be your leader!" The populace, overawed, followed him into the fields, where he renewed his assurances that their wrongs should be redressed. But for so marked a change in the state of

society the nation was not yet ripe; and hence, the charters which were granted under the influence of pressing alarm, the first parliament which assembled unblushingly revoked.

As Richard was scarcely sixteen years of age when he thus repressed the sedition in Smithfield, high hopes were entertained, that, his vigour of mind increasing with his years, he would prove not unworthy of his descent; but those who ventured to encourage this expectation, found that they had entirely mistaken his character. He shook off, indeed, the trammels which his uncles had cast around him, and took the reins of government into his own hands; but his policy at home, as well as abroad, was marked by all the errors which are apt to stain the proceedings of a weak, rather than an unprincipled monarch. The Scots, for example, continued their hostilities, and he marched to chastise them; but he became so weary of the war, and so anxious to resume his career of low pleasures, that he abandoned the country ere any serious advantage had been obtained. In like manner, the arms of England met with frequent reverses on the Continent, which gave no concern to the giddy prince, so long as he was permitted to enjoy his own amusements, and the society of his favourites. These proceedings raised against him a strong party among the nobles; and the people, exasperated by his repeal of their charters of liberty, offered to him no support. The consequence was, that after he had attained to the age of one-and-twenty, a conspiracy was formed against him; and, on the pretext that he was as yet too young to govern, Gloucester put himself at the head of a commission, by which all the authority of the crown was wielded.

Richard bore his degradation with impatience, imbibed as it was by the plunder and expulsion from office of his companions; one of whom, by name De

Vere, he had created duke of Ireland; and another, De la Poole, he had advanced to the dignity of earl of Suffolk. For a whole year he had laboured to set the commission aside, during which interval he obtained a decision from the judges that it was illegal; but the influence of Gloucester was too great for him, and they who spoke against his proceedings paid the penalty with their lives or fortunes. At last, after having borne numerous indignities, he saw, or imagined, that the tide of popularity had turned; and he boldly declared in a council, that he would no longer submit to tutors, seeing that he had attained to the full age of manhood, and was capable of acting for himself. The nobles were astonished, and betrayed, by the tone of their reply, that they were not prepared to refuse submission by violence; whereupon, the king proceeded on the instant to deprive of authority the most obnoxious among the members of the commission. The great seal was taken from Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, and given to William of Wickham, bishop of Winchester; the duke of Gloucester, the earl of Warwick, and other lay lords, were removed from the council, and all the great officers of the household, as well as the judges, were changed. But Richard was too well assured of the hostility and of the power of his uncle, to stop here. He caused him to be arrested, and sent over to Calais, where he shortly afterwards died by the hands of assassins, employed, as was said, under the express directions of the king.

The destruction of Gloucester, and the overthrow of his party, freed the king from all the restraints which fear is apt to occasion, and "he began," says Froissart, "to reign more fiercely than before." "In those days, there was none so great in England that durst speak against anything that the king did;" and, "he had counsel meet for his appetite, who exhorted him to do what he list." Murmurs of course began to be heard

on all sides, the people complaining of the parliament, and the nobles of the minions who surrounded the king's person; while such was their mutual distrust one of another, that no one ventured to speak his mind freely, even to his nearest neighbour. At the period of which I am now writing, John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, was living in retirement, after having wasted his own, and impoverished the resources of his country, in a vain attempt to gain the crown of Castile. He had a son, named Henry, by the Spanish princess, through whom he claimed his throne, whom the king had created duke of Hereford, in addition to his hereditary dignity as earl of Derby. This nobleman, riding towards London one day, overtook the duke of Norfolk, and entered with him into conversation, respecting the aspect of public affairs. How far the latter may have given utterance to imprudent expressions, it is hard to say; but Hereford made a very ungenerous use of what had passed: he accused Norfolk of slandering the king, by attributing to him a design to subvert or destroy many of his principal nobility. Norfolk denied the charge, gave Hereford the lie, and challenged him, according to the custom of the times, to mortal combat. The challenge was accepted, and the lists marked out; but when the day of trial came, the king interfered, and both parties were condemned to banishment. Norfolk was directed to quit the kingdom and never to return, under the penalty of death; Hereford was likewise expatriated, though for the space of only ten years.

Hereford received his sentence with such a show of resignation, that Richard was melted into compassion, and gave him a promise in writing, that in the event of his father's demise, he should, even while in exile, obtain possession of the vacant estates and honours.

That pledge, however, like many others, Richard forgot as soon as it was granted; and, Lancaster

dying soon afterwards, the king took possession of his lands, and retained them for his own use. Hereford experienced, as was natural, extreme indignation at the proceeding. Finding remonstrance of no avail, he resolved to strike for a still higher prize; and as his riches were great, his reputation lofty, and his manners singularly attractive, he found that partisans would not be wanting. In the meanwhile, Richard continued to indulge in all the low and disgraceful pursuits to which alone his tastes inclined him. He associated only with buffoons and parasites; he permitted justice to be obstructed through sheer indolence; and provoked, by his devotion to selfish pleasures, all classes of the people. It was at this unpropitious moment that he took his departure for Ireland, in order to avenge, on certain rebels, the death of his kinsman, the earl of Marche, whom he had appointed his lieutenant in that country, and who had been slain in a skirmish. He was no sooner gone, than Lancaster, whose friends were both active and true, received intelligence of the proceeding. Lancaster did not hesitate to seize the favourable opportunity, but embarking at Nantz, with a retinue of only sixty persons, among whom were the archbishop of Canterbury, and the earl of Arundel, landed, on the 4th of July, at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire. The first of the nobles who joined Henry's standard, were the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, men of great wealth and influence, and long and deeply tinctured with disaffection. Their example was speedily followed by others; till, in the course of a short time, the escort of sixty persons had swelled into an army of sixty thousand men. It was to no purpose that the duke of York, whom his nephew had left guardian of the realm, summoned the force of the nation to meet him at St. Alban's. Men came, but there was no spirit of loyalty among them; indeed, the regent himself stood

not clear of the suspicion that he favoured one nephew rather than another. Meanwhile, Richard was in Ireland, ignorant of the danger which threatened, and baffled, after intelligence had reached him, by a succession of foul winds; nor, when at last he returned to Milford, with twenty thousand men in his train, were the prospects which met him in any degree cheering or consolatory. On all hands his subjects declared against him, and the very troops of which he was at the head deserted, till scarce six thousand remained with their colours. Richard's heart sank within him. He endeavoured to escape to the continent, but failed; for, having retired to Conway Castle, he was there circumvented by the army of Henry, and induced to surrender himself into the hands of the earl of Northumberland. The residue of his tale is soon told. After having been insulted by his cousin, and led in a sort of triumph to London, amid the jeers of a giddy populace, always delighted with what is new, he was finally deposed by vote of parliament; which admitted the validity of a claim put in by Henry, and secured him for king. This event occurred on the 30th of September, 1398; nor did the unhappy prince long survive his degradation. Being conveyed to Pomfret Castle, as a place of safety, he was there murdered; according to one account, by his gaolers, who hewed him to pieces with their axes; according to another, which appears more worthy of belief, by the slow process of starvation.

There can be no doubt that Richard was guilty of many grave offences; yet his character appears to have been that of a weak rather than of a wicked prince. We never find, for example, throughout the whole of his reign, any serious remonstrance from parliament on the score of an overstretched prerogative, a complaint which was continually brought, and with perfect justice, against his renowned predecessor. But, his pitiable

imbecility rendering him incapable of overawing his nobles, the laws fell sadly into contempt, and numberless crimes were perpetrated, of which he was no other-wise the cause than that he possessed not vigour enough to repress them. So true is it, that in England, at all periods of her history, a weak monarch has proved the greatest curse to his people, even when his intentions have been, what it would be rash to predicate of those of Richard, uniformly upright.

The reign of Richard was also memorable for the first outbreak of a spirit of disaffection to the corruptions of the church of Rome. This is no place to speak at length of efforts, however praiseworthy, that led to no immediate result; otherwise the career of Wickliffe might demand especial notice. But my limits will not permit me to say more of that illustrious forerunner of Cranmer and Ridley, than that he was a secular clergyman, and a distinguished scholar in the university of Oxford, and that he began early to protest against the doctrines and practices of the ecclesiastics of his day. He condemned the usurped power of the Pope himself; the abuses of the monastic system, and the unscriptural tenets which both monks and seculars inculcated, touching the nature of the Lord's Supper. He made many converts, both among the higher and the lower classes; and was arraigned, by order of the sovereign pontiff, before Courtenay, bishop of London; but, being supported by the duke of Lancaster and Lord Percy, the earl marshal, he escaped uninjured. It is to be lamented that, at a later stage of his life, he sullied the reputation of his early years, by an apparent renunciation of doctrines which he had well and openly taught. Nevertheless, the good seed was not scattered in vain. Many of his pupils carried it to distant lands, where it continued to flourish; nor were the Lollards, as these remonstrants against popery were termed, ever totally rooted out, till they became lost in the great tide of the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

In describing the events of the preceding reign, mention was made, that the tax imposed by John upon the realm, and previously paid to the Pope, was, together with the old form of Peter's pence, abolished. Under Richard, the parliament exhibited symptoms still more decided, of a disposition to curtail the privileges, both of the See of Rome, and of the clergy in general. The former had hitherto claimed a right to dispose of the revenues of the church for the general benefit of Christianity in all quarters of the globe; the parliament, by its statute of *provisors*, took away that power for ever, and rendered it penal in any person, whether ecclesiastic or layman, to alienate the proceeds of a benefice. In like manner it was declared contrary to the laws and customs of England, that the Pope should remove an English bishop from his see, under the pretext of translating him to a diocese *in partibus infidelium*. Again, the provisions of the Mort-



Great Seal of Richard the Second.

main Act, which the clergy had learned to elude, were enforced under severe penalties. These, together with various laws condemnatory of associations, by which a number of noblemen and gentlemen bound themselves mutually to support one another, indicate a great and important change in the manners and customs of the nation. They imply that not only were men's minds becoming more and more open to the genuine truths of the Gospel; but that the feudal system, with all its admixture of good and evil, was falling fast into decay.

It is worthy of remark, that the custom of creating peers by patent began, in this reign, to be recognised as constitutional. Lord Beauchamp, of Holt, was the first commoner ennobled by this process,—whose descendants claimed and enjoyed the rights of a peer of parliament.

HENRY THE FOURTH.

As the succession of this prince to the English throne paved the way to the memorable contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, it may be well, ere proceeding to give an account of the events of his reign, if I describe, in a few words, the lineage of the former family.

Richard the Second, though twice married,—first to Anne of Luxemburg, called “the good Queen Anne,” and afterwards to an infant princess of France,—left no issue. According to established usage, the descendants of Lionel, duke of Clarence, were therefore the direct heirs of the throne; and as his daughter Philippa (for he had no son) had married Edward Mortimer, earl of March, the fruits of that union naturally succeeded to the claims of the mother. These were Roger Mortimer, of whose fall in Ireland mention has been made, and his two children, Edmund and Anne. The son, who was an infant at the period of Richard's deposition,

lived and died in the service of Henry; the daughter gave her hand to Richard of York, the earl of Cambridge, and grandson to Edward the Third, by his fourth son, Edward, duke of York. From that stock sprang the princes, who long and desperately fought to recover a position which their ancestors had abandoned; and whose wars fill one of the most bloody, not to say romantic, pages, in the history of this or any other country.

The reign of Henry proved the truth of the old adage, that the usurper's crown will always sear the brow of him that wears it. Though he met at first with no opposition, and obtained for his eldest son the title of prince of Wales, but a short time elapsed ere plots and conspiracies began to thicken around him. One of these, in which some of the principal nobility were involved, was betrayed to him by the twofold baseness of the earl of Rutland; and the earls of Kent, Huntingdon, Salisbury, and many others, died under the hand of the executioner. But Henry acquired no confidence from the suppression of an intrigue, which cost so much of the best blood of England. He well knew that the memory of wrongs, or supposed wrongs, will generally outlast the terror which the infliction of cruel punishments is apt to create. He therefore strove to strengthen himself by calling the church to his aid, towards which his opinions were supposed, at one time, to have been very little favourable; and passed an act which consigned to the cruelty of the popish priests, all who should refuse to abjure the heresy of Wickliffe. Even this proceeding, however, served not to overawe his enemies, who continued, both at home and abroad, to harass and disturb him. The king of France threatened his Gascon provinces with invasion; the Scots broke into the northern counties with their usual barbarity: a Welsh gentleman, by name Owen Glendower, the descendant of a long

line of Celtic kings, raised the standard of rebellion, defeated the English forces sent against him, and took Mortimer, their leader, captive. It is not difficult to understand why the last-mentioned occurrence should have created very little uneasiness in Henry's mind. Mortimer was his great rival; and he doubtless rejoiced at the occurrence of an accident, which removed such a man from the vicinity of the throne; but his refusal to ransom the youth, when urged to do so by his powerful relative, the earl of Northumberland, was, to say the least of it, exceedingly imprudent. A feeling of dissatisfaction was thus excited in the mind of the great northern chief, which future proceedings soon changed into animosity, and hurried on to rebellion.

It chanced that, in the year 1402, Archibald, earl of Douglas, attended by many of the nobles of Scotland, led an army of twelve thousand men into England, and committed, as was his wont, prodigious havoc, whithersoever he went. The Percies intercepted him at Homeldon, on his return home, overthrew his followers, and made himself, with other chiefs, prisoners. It was the custom of the times, for those who captured knights and nobles in battle, to release them on the payment of stipulated ransoms; and Percy was prepared to follow the practice of his ancestors, when he received from the king a positive prohibition. The proud spirit of Northumberland could not brook this. He called to mind the many obligations which he had conferred upon Henry Bolingbroke, and determined to cancel them all by dethroning the man who could thus easily forget them. Alliances were immediately formed with his captives; Owen Glendower was likewise appealed to; and twelve thousand men, under the command of his son Henry, a gallant warrior, and, for his impetuosity, surnamed Hotspur, marched to Shrewsbury, where the Welsh chief had promised to meet them. But Henry the Fourth was no laggard in

affairs of war, as his past career had shown. He collected a force equal in point of numbers to that of which Hotspur was at the head; and marching rapidly to the place of rendezvous, forced the malecontents to give battle, ere their mountain allies had joined. It was a fierce and obstinate struggle, in which Percy on one side, and Henry, prince of Wales, on the other, particularly distinguished themselves; but it ended, after the fall of the former, by an unknown hand, in the total defeat of the Northumbrians. Seldom had a combat in the middle ages proved so fatal to men of rank. Two thousand three hundred gentlemen are said to have perished on both sides,—while of the private soldiers six thousand gave their carcasses to fatten the soil. A second affair, in which, by successful guile, the earl of Westmoreland prevailed over the archbishop of Canterbury and the earl of Nottingham, put an end to this rebellion. The archbishop and Nottingham were both executed; while Northumberland himself, after passing some time as a fugitive in Scotland, made a desperate attempt to regain his influence, and was slain with Lord Bardolf, in a skirmish at Bramham, by the forces of Sir Thomas Rothesley, sheriff of Yorkshire.

All this while, and for many years afterwards, the brave and indefatigable Glendower contrived, among the fastnesses of his native country, to maintain a noble independence. On more than one occasion he baffled the flower of the English warriors, even when led on by the sovereign in person, and acquired a reputation so high, that the king of France did not scruple to receive his ambassadors, and to treat with him as monarch of Wales, the title which he ventured to assume. Even Prince Henry, the future hero of Agincourt, though his opponent in several campaigns, failed to reduce him to submission, for we find him, so late as 1415, at the head of troops, whom he still led to victory and to

plunder. The ultimate destiny of this singular man is, however, involved in mystery. That his countrymen shamefully forsook him is certain, but where, or in what condition he died, no account has reached us, on the truth of which it would be prudent to rely.

While these things were going on at home, the relations of amity with France, notwithstanding repeated provocations, were preserved with a degree of care, for which motives of policy can alone account. The truth is, that Henry, distrustful of the allegiance of his own subjects, saw that a foreign war, even though successfully conducted, could not fail to increase his difficulties; while the French people, divided among themselves by the machinations of the hostile factions of Burgundy and Orléans, were in no condition to risk a contest with their neighbours. On more than one occasion, indeed, but particularly in 1412, a force of English auxiliaries took the field,—their aid being purchased at the expense of lofty promises, first by one and then by the other of the contending parties, but no serious war ensued; for even the dukes of Berri and Orléans, who bid highest for the service of the foreigners, repented of their lack of patriotism, and declined the proffered aid. Under such circumstances Henry found leisure and opportunity to consolidate his own throne, by providing, under the sanction of various acts of parliament, for the succession. Yet was he not without sources of anxiety and uneasiness in his own family. His eldest son, Henry, brilliant as his military services had been, exhibited a taste for low pleasures, which greatly distressed his father, and involved him, more than once, in legal difficulties, very little creditable to his name or station. On one of these occasions, certain of his confederates, having been convicted, were sentenced to a term of imprisonment, by the chief-justice Gascoyne. The prince demanded their release, and receiving a refusal, drew his sword upon the chief-

justice. He was immediately ordered into confinement; and, sensible of the outrage of which he had been guilty, he submitted without a murmur. When the tale was told to the king, who then laboured under a severe bodily disease, he listened to it with marked gratification. "Happy the monarch," said he, "who possesses a judge so resolute in the discharge of his duty, and a son so willing to yield to the authority of the law."

While thus afflicted with domestic troubles, and harassed with the anxieties incident upon a usurpation however successful, the king's health gave way, so that he was seized, in the forty-sixth year of his age, with all the symptoms of declining life. Besides labouring under a loathsome cutaneous eruption, he became a martyr to epilepsy, under which the powers both of mind and body rapidly sank. It is said, that, while thus dying by inches, the recollection of the means by which he had won his crown ate into his soul; and the following anecdote, of the truth of which there seems no reason to be distrustful, would seem to verify the tradition. It chanced that on a certain day, he was taken in a fit, which lasted so long that his attendants gave up the hope of his recovery. His son, who sat by him till all seemed to be over, removed the crown from his bed-side; but the king, contrary to expectation, recovered, and sternly demanded by whom so gross an outrage had been committed. The prince avowed not only the deed itself, but the motive which actuated him to it. "Alas, fair son," said the monarch, "what right have you to the crown, when you know your father had none?" "My liege," answered young Henry, "with the sword you won it, and with the sword I will keep it." The king was silent for a while, after which he said, in a faint tone, "Well, do as you think best. I leave the issue to God, and hope he will have mercy on my soul." Henry the Fourth did not

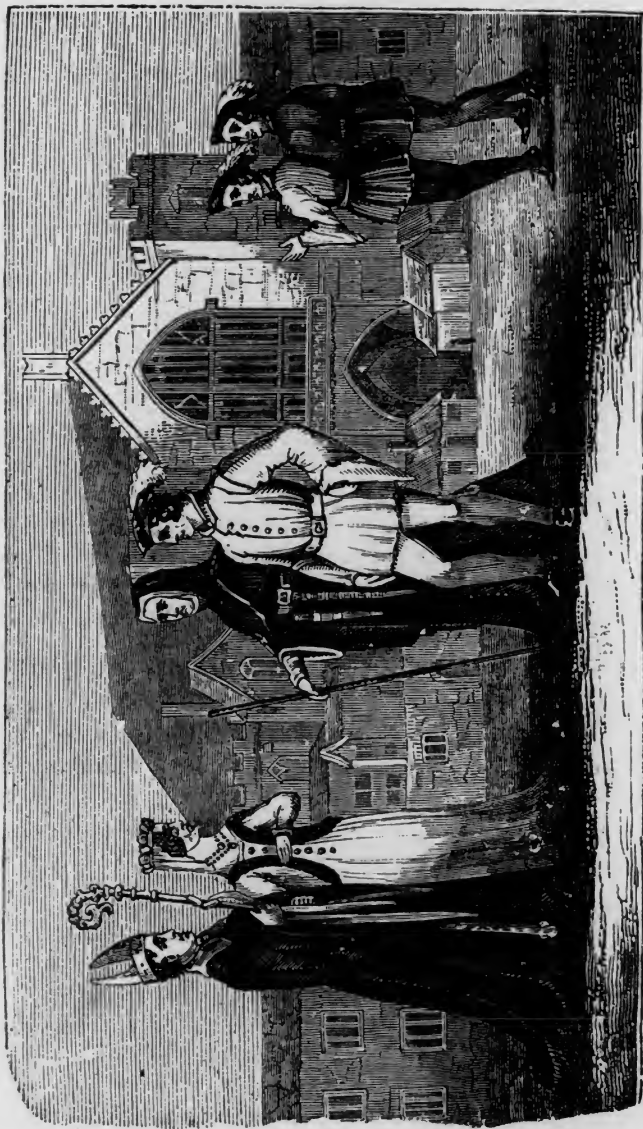
long survive this transaction. He died on the 20th of March, 1413, at Westminster, after an uneasy, but not unimportant reign of something more than thirteen years.

In describing the events of previous reigns, I have taken occasion to point out, that from the days of the celebrated De Montfort the popular branch of the English legislature went on, though by very slow degrees, to acquire, from year to year, additional influence. The reign of the fourth Henry is remarkable for the great strides which the House of Commons made in the pursuit of political power. As an usurper, and an object of constant jealousy to the nobles, Henry found it necessary to enlist on his side the good-will of the people; and he adopted the obvious expedient of throwing more and more authority into the hands of their representatives. He did not scruple, it is true, to exercise all the influence of the crown in guiding the elections; yet he was compelled, when the parliament met, to yield to his Commons more than one point, for which his predecessors would have struggled even to the death. He consented to a law which enacted, that a judge, in concurring with any iniquitous measure, should not be excused by pleading the orders of the king, or even the danger of his own life, from the menaces of the sovereign. He was unable or unwilling to resist a claim which they put in, of having their petitions answered, previous to the granting of any supply. In like manner, when required to dismiss from his household four obnoxious persons, he thought it prudent, after protesting that he disbelieved the accusations laid, to obey. But the attacks made by the House of Commons upon the privileges and property of the church were still more remarkable. They required, that no other order than that of parish priests should be recognised, and that the revenues of all degrees of ecclesiastics should be confiscated. They

were not successful in this; because the king, however willing he might be to purchase their support by moderate concessions, was too wise to shake to their foundation all the arrangements of civil society. Yet the fact, that such demands could be made, suffices to prove, not only that the spirit of civil liberty was awakened, but that opinions, hostile at least to those of which the Popish clergy were the teachers, had gained considerable ground within the realm.

In Henry's reign the principles of commerce were very little understood. Most of all the useful, and all the ornamental arts, were carried on by foreigners, of whom an excessive jealousy was entertained; particularly of the Flemings, a patient and industrious race, to whom not England alone, but Europe at large, is greatly indebted. Nevertheless, the progress of civilization is very distinctly marked. We have laws against mutilation, for example, which, while they prove that such horrid practices were still common, give evidence that the spirit of the times was against them, as well as the inclinations of the sovereign.

Henry was twice married; first to Mary de Bohun, daughter and co-heir of the earl of Hereford, by whom he had three sons and two daughters; and next, to Jane, the daughter of the king of Navarre, who brought him no issue.



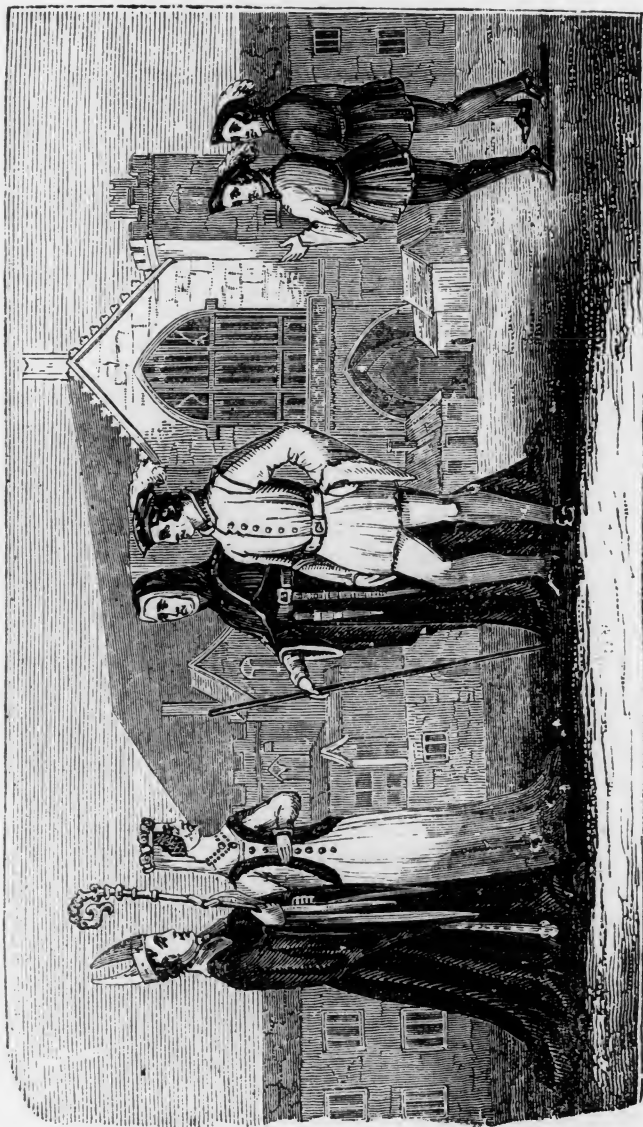
Westminster Hall and Costumes, in the Time of Henry the Fourth.

CHAPTER XII.

HENRY THE FIFTH.—HIS WISDOM AND POPULARITY.—WAR WITH FRANCE.—BATTLE OF AZINCOURT.—HE MARRIES CATHERINE OF FRANCE, AND IS DECLARED REGENT AND SUCCESSOR.—HIS DEATH.—HENRY THE SIXTH.—HIS WEAKNESS.—REVERSES IN FRANCE.—CIVIL WARS.—GREAT CRUELITIES ON BOTH SIDES.—THE DUKE OF YORK PROCLAIMED KING, AS EDWARD THE FOURTH.

[A. D. 1413 to A. D. 1461.]

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asperities and heartburnings which the events of the late reign had excited. He released his cousin, the earl of March, from restraint, and took him into favour. He restored the Percies to their original greatness, and won the hearts of the nation at large by paying respect to the remains of the unfortunate Richard, and erecting to his memory a monument in Westminster Abbey.

While Henry was thus labouring to secure the goodwill of his subjects, an event occurred, which threatened at one moment seriously to disturb the policy of his government. The Lollards having increased in numbers, and gained over to their cause several men of rank and station, it was judged necessary by the heads of the church to carry the penal laws into force. Sir John Oldcastle, lord Cobham, was accordingly arrested, and, refusing to abandon his principles, was condemned to the stake. Oldcastle, however, escaped from the Tower, the day previous to that appointed for his execution, and being of a fiery spirit, roused his adherents to vindicate their creed with the sword. A conspiracy was entered into, which had for its object the seizure of the king's person, and the extermination of all who had taken an active part in the late persecutions. But the plot was disclosed to Henry, who took proper means to defeat it; and seized and brought to trial several of the ringleaders, all of whom suffered death. Cobham himself escaped, it is true, but being taken four years afterwards, he also underwent the extreme penalty of the law; for he was first hanged as a traitor against the state, and then burned as an incorrigible heretic.

Partly to withdraw the attention of his subjects from such scenes, and partly to indulge his own warlike humour, Henry made preparations, in the year 1415, to carry an army into France. The state of that unhappy country was, indeed, such as to invite the hostility of a prince ambitious of renown; for Charles

the Sixth laboured under a malady which rendered him incapable of the duties of government; and two powerful factions contended for the right of furnishing a guardian to his person, and a regency for the administration of public affairs. These were headed respectively by the dukes of Orléans and Burgundy; the former, the king's brother, the latter his cousin-german; and they were equally unscrupulous touching the means which they employed for the furtherance of their own views, and the depression of their rival's interests. The first who dipped his hands in blood was Burgundy. He caused Orléans to be assassinated in the streets of Paris; and seeing that his guilt could not be concealed, he proclaimed and argued boldly in its justification. A civil war ensued, which spread through every province of the kingdom, and arrayed one half of the population against the other. Henry the Fourth had increased the conflagration by sending aid sometimes to one party, sometimes to the other; Henry the Fifth pursued a bolder policy, and strove to draw from it important advantages to himself. He opened a negotiation with the dominant faction, proposed to marry Catherine, the French king's daughter, and demanded as her dower, in addition to a large sum of money, the restoration of all the provinces which Philip Augustus had overrun. Enfeebled as they were, the French would listen to no such proposition; and Henry, nothing loth, assembled an army, with which he made ready to strike for a still more lofty prize.

A conspiracy, in which the earl of Cambridge, who had married the sister of the earl of March, played a prominent part, scarcely served to retard these preparations. Having been convicted of a design to dethrone the king, that nobleman, with Sir Thomas Grey, and lord Scrope, suffered death; while March himself, the object of the rising, was admitted again into favour. But Henry did not linger long over the

details of an affair, which, to speak truth, was not of a nature to excite in his mind any serious alarm. He drew together six thousand men at arms, and twenty-four thousand foot, of which the larger proportion were archers, and sailing from Portsmouth on the 14th of August, landed at Harfleur, of which he formed the siege. The place, despite of a feeble garrison and dilapidated fortifications, made a brave resistance; but on the 18th of September, it surrendered on capitulation, after costing, chiefly by sickness, the lives of nearly two-thirds of the array with which Henry sat down before it.

Conscious of his inability, with forces so diminished, to accomplish any important conquests that season, Henry determined to return home; and, as his transports had withdrawn from the open roadstead of Harfleur, he endeavoured to obtain from his enemies a safe conduct as far as Calais. But though he offered his newly-made conquest, as the price of this concession, it was refused; and he saw that his sole resource lay in the bravery of his men. He marched from Harfleur, sustained frequent skirmishes, and, passing the Somme in good order, reached the high grounds above Azincourt, whence he beheld in the plain beneath, and directly between him and his point of embarkation, the whole of the French army. It consisted of fourteen thousand men-at-arms, and forty thousand foot, a power more than equal to the task of trampling down the handful of English that followed the king's banner, had ordinary judgment been present to direct its operations, by controlling the headstrong bravery of the nobles, of whom it was in a great degree composed.

The situation of Henry and his gallant band resembled in almost every particular that of Edward at Cressy, and of the Black Prince at Poitiers. The odds were fearfully against them: yet the memory of those glorious days cheered all ranks into a confidence

for which there seemed to be no just cause. The king did not fail to turn to account the devoted heroism of his men. He drew them up across a narrow plain, which was skirted on either flank by a thick wood, and causing his archers to plant their stakes, distributed them with admirable judgment, wherever there seemed to be the best scope for the exercise of their skill. All, however, would have availed nothing, had not the fiery valour of the enemy precipitated the battle. The French chivalry charged the yeomen; they were arrested by the chevaux-de-frize, and mowed down by a shower of ell-long arrows. They fell back upon the second line, and threw it also into confusion; upon which the English archers, casting aside their bows, closed upon them, and beat them to the earth with their mallets and battle-axes. It was at this juncture, that Henry led forward his men-at-arms, with their lances in rest; nothing could withstand the shock, and the rout became irretrievable.

Ten thousand French warriors fell in the action; the prisoners amounted to fourteen thousand, of whom many, on the alarm of a second attack from the rear, were slaughtered in cold blood. It was a necessary but a cruel proceeding, to which the king, so soon as he had ascertained that there was no real danger, put a stop; and there still survived a sufficient number to enrich, beyond their most sanguine expectations, the gallant captors. Yet this brilliant victory produced no other results than usually attended the irregular and unconnected exertions of the middle ages. Henry continued his march to Calais, embarked there for England, and, without concluding a truce, permitted two years to pass by ere he carried another English soldier across the channel.

This long interval of apparent rest was not, however, wasted by Henry, whose views began to extend themselves, in proportion as the condition of his

enemies became, day by day, more desperate. He fostered the differences which prevailed among the French chiefs, courted now Burgundy, now the Dauphin, between whom a deadly feud existed; and kept alive, by his intrigues, the flame of civil dissension, which a more open attempt upon the independence of the nation might, perhaps, have smothered. At one moment, indeed, his prospects appeared to be entirely overcast; for Burgundy and the Dauphin made advances to a reconciliation; and even met on the bridge of Montereau, where the former fell by the swords of the Dauphin's attendants. Henry, who was already in Normandy, at the head of a formidable army, hastened to take advantage of this circumstance. He contracted a close alliance with the queen, and the party which she favoured; was acknowledged by them as heir to the French crown; obtained the hand of Catherine, the daughter of Charles the Sixth, and took the style, and exercised the authority, of regent. Attended by the son of the murdered duke, and amid the shouts of the people of Paris, he made his triumphal entry into the capital, where he was received with enthusiasm. He there fixed his residence, dining in public at the same table with Charles, acknowledged by him as his successor, and keeping a court not more numerous than brilliant; while the Dauphin, driven to seek an asylum beyond the Loire, saw his friends fall off from him daily, and his strength waste away. Yet he was not entirely forsaken. Those who really loved their country adhered to him; and, a band of seven thousand Scots arriving to his aid, he was able even then, principally by their means, to throw a halo round his sinking cause. Buchan, the leader of the Scots, obtained a brilliant victory over the duke of Clarence, at Beaugé, in Anjou; in which the duke himself fell by the lance of a Scottish knight,

Sir Allan Swinton, and the earls of Somerset, Dorset, and Huntingdon, were taken prisoners.

Henry had now attained to the summit of his glory. France lay at his feet, and the birth of a son, who received his father's name, appeared to ensure the greatness of his house, and the future union of the two crowns. His English subjects, indeed, seem to have become justly alarmed at the prospects which were before them; for their sovereign no longer dwelt among them, but paid them occasional visits, only when his necessities drove him to apply to the parliament for aids. But, at a moment when all things appeared to promise repose, the fiat of mortality had gone forth, and Henry was seized with a disease, in itself easy of removal, but which the ignorance of his surgeons knew not how to treat. He soon ascertained that recovery was impossible, and he prepared to end his days, with the same fortitude and calmness which had characterized him throughout his busy and active career. He summoned to his sick-bed those noblemen in whom he reposed the greatest confidence. To the duke of Bedford he committed the regency of France; to the duke of Gloucester that of England; and the charge of the infant prince he intrusted to the earl of Warwick, a man of boundless ambition, and almost boundless power. He enjoined upon these three, to cultivate assiduously the friendship of the duke of Burgundy, and to retain, till his son should come of age, the prisoners of rank who had been taken at the battle of Azincourt; and conjured them, should they fail in establishing young Henry on the throne of France, never to make peace with that country, till Normandy should have been added in full sovereignty to England. Finally, he directed his chaplain to chant the seven penitential psalms, in which he joined with great fervour; and died, the 31st of August, 1422, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and tenth of his reign.

HENRY THE SIXTH.

BRILLIANT as the conquests of Henry the Fifth had been, they tended in no degree to strengthen the authority of the crown, which had been repeatedly compelled to solicit supplies from the parliament, and to give up in exchange, prerogatives resting upon the prescription of ages. Of the readiness of the two houses to dispute the arbitrary will of the sovereign, a memorable example was afforded, immediately after his decease. They declined altogether the name of *regent* with regard to England. They appointed the duke of Bedford protector or guardian of the kingdom, a title which they supposed to imply a less degree of authority; they invested the duke of Gloucester with the same dignity, during the absence of his elder brother in France; and, the better to limit the power of both princes, they appointed a council, without the advice and approbation of which, no measure of importance could be determined. These proceedings, together with the committal of the young king's person, not to the earl of Warwick, but to his great uncle, Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, place in a conspicuous point of view the important changes which were already in progress in the constitution of England; changes which gradually transferred a large share of legislative power from the monarch to the people, and left to the former an authority in such matters co-ordinate only with that of the peers and the commons.

The long reign of Henry the Sixth comprehends two distinct portions which bear to one another very little resemblance, and between which there is no other connexion than that which necessarily joins contemporary transactions in neighbouring countries. The first extends over a space of thirty years, and embraces the details of a war which ended in the expulsion of the

English from France, and the overthrow of the claim which their sovereigns had long and unjustly set up to the throne of that country. To describe that contest chronologically, besides that it would occupy much more space than the limits of this history will afford, would fatigue, without conveying any important information to the reader. Our purpose will, therefore, be best served, if I endeavour to give an outline of the principal causes which led to the failure of the English arms; as well in reference to the intrigues of rival statesmen, as to the operations of the hostile armies in the field.

The death of Charles the Sixth, which occurred within two months of that of Henry the Fifth, was the first accident which tended to weaken the hold of the English upon a country of which they were as yet but partially in possession. While it denuded Bedford of the semblance of native authority,—a phantom which had in no trivial degree strengthened the hands of the late king, it caused many Frenchmen, who had hitherto held aloof, to turn first a compassionate, and then a friendly eye to the rightful successor. Bedford, it is true, a prince of consummate temper and address, laboured to rob the calamity of its sting, and but for the roughness and impetuosity of his brother, the duke of Gloucester, he might, perhaps, have succeeded. He engaged the dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne to rivet the bonds into which they had already entered; while by procuring for the king of Scotland a release from his long captivity, and uniting him to an English lady, the object of his own choice, he ensured tranquillity to the northern border. But a foolish affair, in which Gloucester involved himself, rendered all these precautions useless, and shook to their very base the alliances on which alone the fortunes of the English in France depended.

Jacqueline, countess of Hainault and Holland, after

the death of her first husband, John, dauphin of France, had given her hand to her cousin-german, John, duke of Brabant, of whom she soon grew tired, and whom she shamelessly abandoned. She fled to England, and, without waiting for the sentence of an ecclesiastical court, proclaimed that the union was from the first illegal, and entered into a new contract with the duke of Gloucester. It was to no purpose that Bedford warned his brother of the mischief which would inevitably result from the connexion. Less enamoured of Jacqueline's person than of her rich domains, Gloucester persisted in treating her as his wife, and set up a claim, which gave mortal umbrage not only to the duke of Brabant, but to Burgundy. It would be tedious to relate how the quarrel went on, assuming day by day a more serious aspect; or how Bedford, by patience and admirable address, succeeded in deferring the threatened rupture. Let it suffice to state, that he did succeed in smothering up the flame for a season; though the embers long continued to smoke, and the fuel was ready prepared for a fresh conflagration, which in due time took place.

Meanwhile hostilities continued to be carried on in France, sometimes with fierceness, sometimes languidly, to the great detriment of the inhabitants at large, and very little to the honour of either of the contending parties. During the first seven years, indeed, which succeeded the demise of Henry the Fifth, fortune declared generally for the English, who, in 1424, gained so signal a victory at Verneuil, that it was compared, not unjustly, with those of Cressy, Poitiers, and Azincourt. Nevertheless, the Dauphin, or, as he ought now to be termed, Charles the Seventh, persevered in his resistance. He retired into the south, carried on a war of posts and skirmishes, and appeared rather to wait till the patriotism of the nation should awaken, than to aim at an object so impracticable as

the recovery of his lost provinces by the sword. But Bedford, who for some time previously had found occupation enough in allaying dissensions at home, determined, in 1428, to deprive him of his last asylum. He made preparations to carry his arms across the Loire, and, as a preliminary step, directed the earl of Salisbury, one of his most renowned generals, to lay siege to Orléans. Salisbury was early slain by a cannon-ball, (for artillery was by this time mounted and used in sieges,) upon which the command devolved upon the earl of Suffolk, who gradually drew round the place a chain of redoubts and intrenchments, so as to cut off all communication between the garrison and the open country. Yet at this moment, when success appeared inevitable, and Charles himself had given up all for lost, Providence was preparing deliverance for the French nation, by means abundantly feeble, when regarded only with the eye of reason, but, as the event proved, fully adequate to the necessities of the times.

In the village of Domremy, near Vaucouleurs, in Lorraine, there dwelt a peasant-girl called Joan of Arc, who, being employed as an ostler at a little inn, was accustomed to ride without a saddle, and to perform other feats requiring dexterity and courage, which usually fall to the lot of the rougher sex. An enthusiast from her childhood, and brought up among devoted royalists, she began about this time to receive an impression that Heaven designed to employ her as an instrument for the deliverance of her country. In her sleep she beheld visions, and heard voices, which assured her that she should conduct the Dauphin to Rheims, and be present at his coronation, which should be performed there according to the usages of his forefathers. Convinced of the reality of these dotages she made her way into the king's presence, and detailing to him all that had occurred, requested permission to lead a fresh

convoy to Orléans, of which she did not hesitate to prophesy the preservation. The age was a superstitious one; and Charles, whether infected with the general spirit or not, determined to follow what he professed to regard as a Divine impulse. A body of veteran soldiers was ordered under arms; Dunois, the gallant Bastard of Orléans, placed himself at their head, and the whole, accompanied by Joan, who rode a white horse, and carried a consecrated standard, set forward towards the beleaguered city. It was to no purpose that Suffolk and his principal officers affected to deride the commission of the Maid of Domremy. The English soldiers, to the full as superstitious as the French, became panic-struck; and the convoy, after a sharp skirmish, during which Joan received a wound, forced its way into the town. Then followed a series of sorties and encounters, which ended on almost all occasions unfavourably for the besiegers; till at last Suffolk was compelled to set fire to his magazines, and to raise the siege.

Elated by this success, and more and more convinced of her inspiraticn, the Maid now urged Charles to resign himself to her guidance, and undertook to conduct him in safety and with honour to Rheims. It was a perilous enterprise, yet he consented to it; and such was the state of alarm into which the English had fallen, that he prospered, whithersoever his guide led him. Suffolk was attacked at Jergeau, his corps defeated, and himself taken. A second encounter took place at Patay, still more disastrous to the English; and Charles, being conducted to Rheims by his victorious troops, was there crowned with all solemnity. Now, then, Joan of Arc, declaring that her commission was complete, requested leave to retire to her native village; but the king would not consent. He ennobled her and her family, exempted the villages of Greux and Domremy from all public burdens, and expressed himself dis-

pleased because she sought no other favours at his hands; but he would not permit her to abandon a cause of which he professed to believe that she had been the main supporter. It was unfortunate for the poor girl that she permitted the wishes of the king to prevail over what seems to have been her sincere determination. She continued with the army, threw herself into the town of Compiègne, and venturing too far in a sortie, of which she put herself at the head, was taken by the English on the 25th of May. Her fate was alike disgraceful to her captors and her countrymen. The latter, by what motives actuated does not exactly appear, made no exertions to recover her; the former, under the pretext that she was an agent of the devil, condemned her to suffer death by fire.

This act of cruelty, which gave, at the time, universal satisfaction to the enemies of France, had no effect in restoring the ascendancy of the English, which became day by day less conspicuous. They sustained repeated disasters; trifling, perhaps, in detail, but important when viewed in the aggregate; for, in exact proportion as their reputation became lowered, the courage of their adversaries revived. That, however, which gave the final blow to their supremacy, was a renewal of hostile feeling on the part of the duke of Burgundy; the consequence of an act of singular imprudence, of which Bedford himself was guilty. His duchess, the sister of the duke of Burgundy, dying, Bedford, with some semblance of indecent haste, gave his hand to Jacqueline of Luxembourg; and Burgundy, who had not forgotten the behaviour of the duke of Gloucester, took fire. An estrangement followed, which the cardinal of Winchester laboured in vain to remove. Each of these proud men refused to make the first advances to the other; so that after repairing to St. Omer, for the purpose of adjusting their quarrel, they departed

again without meeting. Finally, when, at the suggestion of the Pope and the council of Basle, a conference of crowned heads met at Arras, on the 26th of September, 1435, Burgundy was prevailed upon to attend; and receiving such satisfaction as he chose to demand for the murder of his father, concluded a separate peace with the king of France.

From that time forth, the affairs of the English fell rapidly into confusion. Bedford, who alone appeared capable of sustaining them, died at Rouen, before intelligence of the fatal treaty reached him; and his successor, the duke of York, son to that earl of Cambridge who was executed in the beginning of the late reign, proved unequal to the task of restoring order. He was a brave and able warrior, yet his troops were worsted in numerous affairs. Paris fell, the 13th of April, 1436; Calais itself sustained a siege; Meaux opened its gates in 1439, as did Toulouse in 1441. On the other hand, York, Warwick, and the brave Talbot, performed prodigies of valour: of which the sole results were the devastation of a rich country, and the depopulation of numerous towns and villages. At length, both parties began to grow weary of a contest which bore hard upon their resources, and threatened to be interminable. A truce was concluded in 1444, for the space of twenty months, which was afterwards prolonged for two years more; a breathing-space which was as wisely used by Charles, as it was imprudently wasted by his rival. The consequence was, that when, in 1449, hostilities broke out again, the French carried everything before them. Fort after fort fell, battle after battle was won; till, in 1451, all that remained to England of the foreign conquests achieved by her monarchs, was the town of Calais, with a narrow territory immediately dependent upon it. But it is now high time to look to the second of those portions,

into which we have divided this reign; and to give some account of the domestic transactions by which it was distinguished.

Mention has been made of the measures adopted by parliament for the protection of the king's person, and the guardianship of the realm. Between Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, and the king's uncle, the duke of Gloucester, dissensions soon arose, which the opposite views taken by them of the foreign policy of England, widened into positive hostility. Gloucester was a strong advocate for continuing the war with France; the bishop argued in favour of a relinquishment of all claims upon that monarchy, and the conclusion of a permanent peace, upon almost any terms. In like manner, while the one advised the dismissal of the French prisoners on ransom, the other opposed the measure, as contrary to the dying injunctions of the late king, and manifestly fatal to the pretensions and hopes of the present. These disputes, with other causes of disunion, kept alive in the court of Henry a spirit of intrigue and party; which paralyzed the exertions of the great Bedford, and contributed largely to the reverses of the English abroad, and their turbulences and disquiet at home. By degrees, however, the influence of the bishop prevailed. Pacific counsels were adopted; a truce, as has been shown, was entered into, and the duke of Orléans, after a captivity of twenty-five years, was set at liberty. But the last step which the crafty prelate took, in order to strengthen his own interests, proved, however propitious at the moment, the source of numerous troubles in after-times. By means of the earl of Suffolk, a nobleman warmly attached to his person, he negotiated a marriage between Henry, then in his twenty-third year, and Margaret of Anjou, the daughter of Regnier, titular king of Sicily, Naples, and Jerusalem, a woman possessed of an agreeable person, and a more than mas-

culine disposition. She brought with her, however, no dowry, and was purchased, as most men believed, at an exorbitant cost; for the territories of Maine and Anjou, the keys of Normandy, were ceded to her father as the price of his alliance.

A short while previous to the adjustment of this marriage, which was solemnized in May, 1445, the duchess of Gloucester had been accused of necromancy, her attendants executed, and herself imprisoned for life. Gloucester deeply felt, though he could not resent the wrong; nevertheless, it was thought necessary to crush a man, who might, one day or another, recover sufficient power to act differently. A parliament was summoned to meet at St Edmund'sbury, before which Gloucester was arraigned, on a charge of high-treason; and, at the instigation of Suffolk now nominal head of the government, he was arrested and thrown into prison. Within two days of his committal, Gloucester was found dead in his bed. No external marks of violence were perceptible on the body, which, with suspicious zeal, was exposed naked to the gaze of the public; but the remorse of the bishop, who survived only six weeks, as well as the examples of Richard the Second and Edward the Second, afford strong reason to suspect that he met with unfair treatment.

It was at this juncture, when almost all the heads of the house of Lancaster were no more, that Richard duke of York, the descendant of Lionel duke of Clarence, began to think seriously of advancing a claim to the throne. Hitherto he had served the reigning monarch faithfully and well. He had held successively the offices of lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and guardian of the kingdom of France, where, as was stated some time ago, he displayed the activity and valour of an able leader. But the government of Henry was become both feeble and unpopular; and the well-

known imbecility of the king left men without hope, that, so long as he continued to sit at the helm, things could improve. Popular movements took place. One John Cade, an Irishman by birth, contrived to rouse the men of Kent into rebellion, and marched at the head of twenty thousand of them upon London; of which, after a skirmish with the royal forces, he took possession. The conduct of that adventurer exhibited a rare combination of good sense and extravagance. He demanded only a redress of grievances, and the dismissal of evil counsellors from about the throne; he preserved strict discipline among his people, yet he accepted from the chancellor and the archbishop of Canterbury a deed of indemnity, which he might have foreseen would not be attended to. After beheading the treasurer, lord Say, and fighting a battle in the streets, he relinquished the city, and disbanding his followers, thought to share in the general pardon which had been promised. He soon discovered his mistake, when he found that a price was set upon his head; and he was by and by slain by one Alexander Eden, in whose garden he had endeavoured to conceal himself.

This ill-conducted movement, together with the temper of the House of Commons, which had the hardihood to exhibit articles of impeachment against the minister, now duke of Suffolk, appeared to indicate so clearly the true dispositions of the English people, that the duke of York determined to bring matters to an issue. He passed over from Ireland, of which he was lieutenant, soon after Suffolk's murder, who was taken out of a ship, when proceeding by the king's command into exile, and slain; and entering London at the head of a large army, set the machine at once in motion. He forced himself into the king's presence without waiting for a summons, extorted from him a promise to assemble a parliament, and in the interval before its meeting, withdrew to Fotheringay Castle. The parlia-

ment met, and an attempt was made to get York declared heir-apparent. It failed, and the duke again took up arms; but Henry, or rather the duke of Somerset, by whose advice he acted, collected an army, and York was glad to escape with his life. After taking a fresh oath of allegiance on the sacrament, in St. Paul's, he withdrew to his castle of Wigmore, where for some months he appears to have plotted in secret.

While he resided here two events befell, one favourable, the other exceedingly the reverse, to his present as well as to his ultimate views. The illness of Henry, who became altogether unfit for business, seemed to present an opening for the exercise of his ambition; while the birth of a son by Margaret interposed a serious and an almost insuperable bar to the designs which he had formed on the throne itself. Still he was far from yielding to despondency. He possessed interest enough to have himself appointed by parliament, regent and guardian to the infant prince; and he used his power to remove every partisan of the house of Lancaster from office, and to commit Somerset a prisoner to the Tower. But the unexpected recovery of the king, which occurred about Christmas, arrested him in his career, and forced on a struggle, of the approach of which the nation seemed to be already aware. Somerset was released from confinement, York was removed from the regency, and had no alternative left to him, except to lay aside his pretensions at once and for ever, or to make a formal appeal to the sword.

The people of England, of all ranks and degrees, were at this time divided into two great factions, of which one favoured the rights of the reigning family, and the other argued for the restoration of the legitimate line. The potent earls of Salisbury and Warwick, Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, and Courtney, earl of Devon, supported the pretensions of the Yorkists. The citizens of London espoused the same cause; as

well as all, in whatever part of the country settled, who had suffered from the tyranny of Queen Margaret, or sought to avenge the murder of "the good duke of Gloucester." On the other hand, Percy of Northumberland, and Clifford, in Cumberland, were prepared to arm their followers in defence of the queen. The dukes of Somerset and Buckingham, the earls of Richmond and Pembroke, the issue of Queen Catherine's second marriage with Owen ap Tudor of Wales, and of course the king's half-brothers, were zealous partisans in the same cause. But it would be endless to enumerate the noblemen and gentlemen of distinction, who expressed their willingness to peril life and fortune in this great quarrel. Enough is done, when I state that there were no neutrals within the realm; and, that the great contest which ensued, left scarcely a castle or a cottage in England, within the walls of which the voice of mourning had not been heard, over the fall of one or more of its inmates.

The quarrel appearing to be between the dukes of York and Somerset, Henry exacted from them a promise to submit their differences to the decision of eight arbitrators. Somerset was probably sincere in assenting to the proposition; but York treated the arrangement as nothing more than a ready means of escaping from the perils with which he felt himself to be surrounded. He returned to his possessions on the borders of Wales, and raised an army. At the head of three thousand men, he then advanced upon the capital, and reached St. Alban's unmolested, where the king, with two thousand, met him, and a sharp encounter took place, May 22nd, 1455. It ended in the defeat of the royal forces, who lost, that day, the duke of Somerset, the earl of Northumberland, and lord Clifford, while Henry himself, wounded in the neck by an arrow, fell into the hands of his aspiring, but not ungenerous relative.

The consequence of this victory was, the reappointment of the duke of York as guardian of the kingdom, and the removal from all places of trust or emolument of those on whom he could not rely. It was indeed true, that the king had relapsed into a state of dotage; and as he was treated with marked kindness by his relative and gaoler, no one ventured to arraign the propriety of the arrangement. But Henry again recovered his faculties, and, being swayed by the counsels of his wife, succeeded in an extraordinary manner in driving York a second time from court. Scenes of intrigue and cabal ensued, of which it were as difficult, as it would be unprofitable, to give an account. They ended, after an ostensible reconciliation between the opposite factions, in the departure of the leaders of each to their respective estates; and the assembling on both sides of large armies, which in due season took the field. On the 10th of May, 1459, an action took place at Bloreheath, in which lord Salisbury, with an inferior force, overthrew a corps of ten thousand men under lord Audeley, Audeley himself perishing in the field with upwards of two thousand of his followers. But this disaster to the Lancastrian cause was soon avenged. On the 13th of October, a decisive battle was fought near Ludlow, which ended in the signal defeat of the Yorkists, and the utter dispersion, at least for a time, of the heads of that party. The main cause of the disaster was the desertion of Sir Andrew Trollop, with a body of veterans, of whom he was at the head; and its immediate consequences were the escape of York, through Wales into Ireland, and of Warwick, with his kinsmen and principal retainers, to Calais.

Elated by this success, the queen's counsellors assembled a parliament at Coventry, by which the duke of York, with all who espoused his cause, were attainted. This sentence had slight effect upon the issues of the

struggle; for York assembling forces in Ireland, and Warwick gathering his adherents in Calais, were soon in a condition once more to take the field. Warwick landed in Kent, where he was joined by multitudes of adherents, and marching to London, found its inhabitants prepared to bid him welcome. Nevertheless, the royalists, as the Lancastrians denominated themselves, were not idle. They too gathered an army together, and advancing towards Northampton, staked all upon the issue of a battle. It terminated in the complete triumph of the Yorkists; the duke of Buckingham, the earl of Shrewsbury, the Viscount Beaumont, and three hundred knights and gentlemen being slain, and the king himself again becoming a prisoner in the hands of the adverse faction.

It was now that the question of right to the throne was, for the first time, openly referred to the only tribunal possessed of powers adequate to decide upon it. York, having called together a parliament, laid his claim before it in form; and demanded, as his birth-right, to be acknowledged king of England. The parliament hesitated, the judges refused to give an opinion, the crown-lawyers were equally diffident, till at last, a compromise was proposed, and accepted upon the following terms. It was agreed, that Henry should retain the dignity and title of king during his life, the duke of York discharging, under him, the duties of regent and protector; and that the duke should be acknowledged as undoubted heir to the throne, to the exclusion of the king's son, Edward, the titular prince of Wales.

Decisive as these proceedings appeared to be, Margaret, the indefatigable supporter of her family's rights, was far from assenting to them. She fled into the north, where she soon collected a formidable army, with which she again took the field. At Wakefield, York was so incautious as to hazard a battle with very infe-

rior forces; his troops were defeated, and himself slain. But the death of knights and nobles, though very frequent in such encounters, was nothing, when compared to the ferocity with which, on either side, a temporary success was followed up and abused. At the close of this affair, for example, lord Clifford overtook a boy, apparently about twelve years of age, who, richly dressed, and attended by a single companion, appeared to be in full flight. "Who is this?" exclaimed the fierce baron. "Spare his life," replied the attendant, who proved to be his tutor, "he is the son of a prince, and may one day requite the favour." "Is it so?" shouted Clifford. "Thy father slew my father, and thus will I slay thee and all of thy kin." As he spoke, he plunged his dagger into the boy's heart, who fell dead at his feet. But the barbarity ended not here: the head of the duke himself, crowned with a paper diadem, was placed upon the walls of York, together with those of the noble prisoners, who, to a considerable number, fell into the hands of the victors.

From this moment the war assumed a new character, and the thirst of revenge gave to the combatants on each side a ferocity to which they had heretofore been strangers. Edward, earl of March, now duke of York, had heard of his father's defeat and death at Gloucester, where he had been for some time enrolling troops, and otherwise preparing to assist him. He hastened, February 1st, 1461, to throw himself between the enemy and the capital, and being hard pressed by the earl of Pembroke, turned upon him at Mortimer's Cross, near Wigmore, and defeated him with great slaughter. All the prisoners taken, including Owen Tudor, Pembroke's father, were put to death; a terrible retaliation, which had no other effect than to spread more and more widely the savage spirit which already prevailed. The consequence was,

that when the queen, a few days afterwards, namely, on February 7th, defeated lord Warwick at St. Alban's, and recovered the person of her husband, whom the earl led about with him for political purposes, she too exercised her power without mercy; and the blood of lord Bonville, of Sir Thomas Kyriel, and others, was shed as an atonement for that of the victims of Mortimer's Cross.

Had the queen been in a condition to move immediately upon London, it is probable that the cause of the Red Rose might have triumphed. Her troops were, however, borderers, accustomed to fight first, and afterwards to plunder; so that when she prepared to improve her victory, she found them insensible to the dictates of reason, and the opportunity was lost. She accordingly fell back into the north, leaving behind a reputation for cruelty and rapine, which, probably, attached as much to her followers as to herself. Meanwhile, Edward, duke of York, approached the capital, which he entered at the head of a princely retinue; and having less of delicacy, or greater ambition than his father, claimed the crown at once, as his own by right of birth. In London his friends were numerous, and his personal appearance, in the very flower of youth, told mightily in his favour. On the 4th of March, amid the shouts and rejoicings of a delighted populace, he was proclaimed king by the style and title of Edward the Fourth.

With this act the reign of Henry the Sixth may be said to have terminated; for though the civil war continued to rage for some time afterwards, his authority ceased to be recognised, except by the devoted partisans who adhered, with great honour and personal loss, to a falling cause. But before I proceed with a detail of this, and of other matters which are included under the next reign, it may not be amiss if I point out some of the most memorable enterprises, which

give a character to the era of which I am about to take leave.

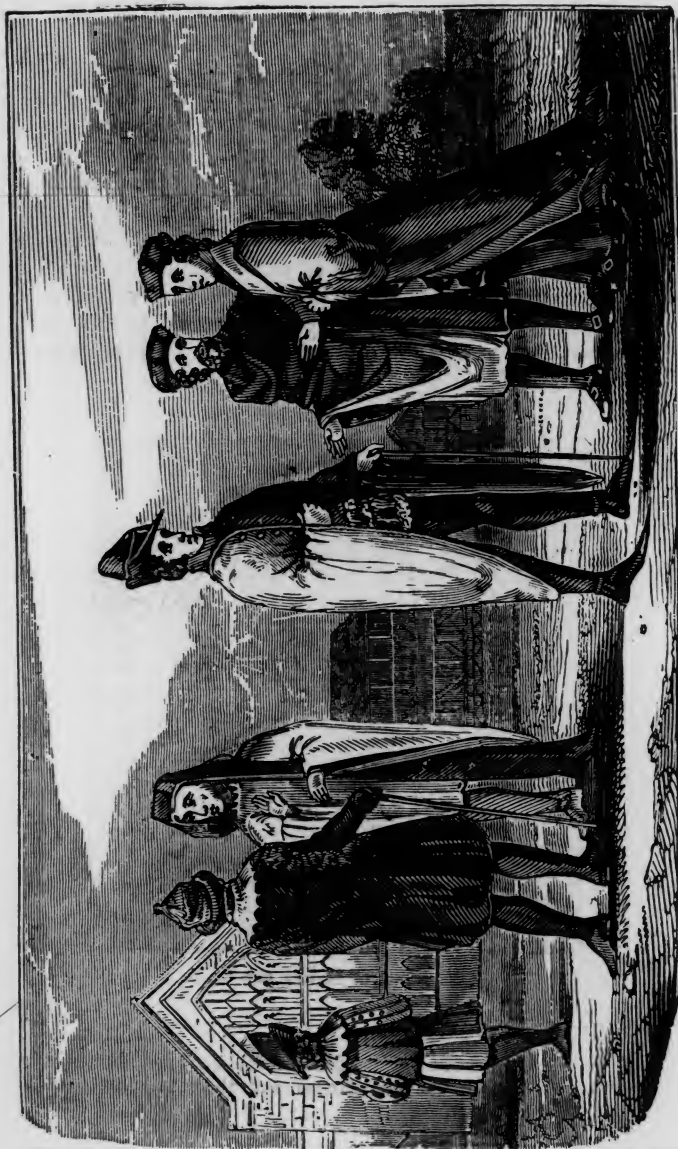
Prominent among these, the fact deserves to be recorded, that the foundations of what may be termed the political system of Europe were now laid; and that the territories of the different nations were fast approaching the shape and limits which they still retain. England, for example, possessed, in 1453, but one town on the continent, the Mohammedans were on the eve of subjugation in Spain, Italy was divided into a number of independent states, Muscovy was emerging from the domination of the Tartars, Constantinople had fallen under the dominion of the Turk, and Venice, Hungary, and Poland, guarded the eastern frontier of Christendom. France had consolidated her power, Austria was daily extending hers, and the German empire becoming more and more a loose confederacy, under a chief little more than nominal. In like manner, the principle of monarchy, as contradistinguished from the oligarchical system of the feudal times, was almost everywhere recognised. Here and there, indeed, as in the Netherlands, in some portions of Switzerland, and in England, the seeds of a free government were sown; but, generally speaking, the will of the monarch had become, or was becoming, supreme, by reason of the decay of one set of institutions, out of which others failed to arise. But this is not all. The mariners' compass had been discovered, by means of which Portuguese adventurers made their way to distant parts of Africa, and by Africa to Hindostan. Gunpowder, too, began to work a change in the mode of warfare, and, above all, the art of printing was invented. In the year of the evacuation of Paris by the English, a lawsuit was carried on at Strasburg, between John Gutenberg, a gentleman of Mentz, and his partner, concerning a certain copying-machine, of which Gutenberg was the inventor, and a

which he desired to retain the secret to himself. That copying-machine was the printing-press; an engine the most important of which man has ever been put in possession; and, like other important machines, not more powerful for good than for evil. These events, with the rapid progress of free inquiry, and the dawn of that glorious Reformation which shortly broke in upon the world, cast a halo round the memory of Henry, otherwise darkened by deeds of extraordinary cruelty, and force upon us the solemn conviction, that whatever may be the external aspect of events, all things, in all ages, work for good, in the hands of Him who directs them.*



Great Seal of Henry the Sixth.

* In the reign of Henry, the Commons obtained the law, which exempts the members of the House and their attendants from arrest or civil process.



Walking Costumes of the Time of Henry the Sixth.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDWARD THE FOURTH—CONTINUANCE OF THE CIVIL WAR—HIS VICISSITUDES OF FORTUNE, AND VICES—EDWARD THE FIFTH—IS MURDERED BY HIS UNCLE THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER—RICHARD THE THIRD—HIS CRIMES—REVOLT OF BUCKINGHAM—LANDING OF RICHMOND—RICHARD'S DEATH—HENRY THE SEVENTH—PLOTS DURING HIS REIGN—HIS AVARICE—HIS DEATH.

[A.D. 1461 to A.D. 1509.]

NOT UNWARE that his title, though admitted in the metropolis, was opposed by many and powerful enemies elsewhere, Edward saw, and acted upon, the necessity of bringing matters to a speedy issue ; and, collecting a great army of forty-nine thousand men, marched, together with the earl of Warwick, into the north. Margaret was there before him, and her forces, to the amount of sixty thousand, occupied a position in the vicinity of York. The two armies approached one another, and an affair took place on the 28th of March, which ended in the capture of the bridge at Ferrybridge, by lord Clifford. But Clifford was in his turn attacked, by a detachment under lord Falconberg, his corps dispersed, and himself slain. These skirmishes were preliminary to the decisive battle which was fought next day, between Towton and Saxton, and which lasted, without intermission, from nine o'clock in the morning till three in the afternoon. It ended in the total rout of the Lancastrians, who left in the field twenty-eight thousand dead, including the earl of Northumberland, and six other noblemen, besides many of the bravest and most devoted of the northern gentry.

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friends of Henry conveyed him to Scotland, where, for a brief space, he and his restless wife enjoyed a secure asylum. In the mean while, Edward returned to London, and his title being again formally acknowledged by a subservient parliament, he went through the ceremony of a coronation on the 29th of June. Bills of attainder against all the adherents of the opposite faction were now brought in and passed. Every suspected person, whether of high or low degree, was prosecuted, and the scaffold streamed with some of the best blood of England, which the field had not drunk in. But the Lancastrians, though defeated, were not yet overcome. Supported by two thousand men-at-arms, which Louis of France had furnished, and followed by a band of Scottish adventurers, Margaret, dragging Henry in her train, burst again into the northern counties, and made herself mistress, by surprise, of the castles of Bamborough, Dunstanburgh, and Alnwick. But it was the last convulsion of an expiring cause. The Lancastrians were defeated in two battles; the first fought at Hedgley Moor, on the 25th of April, 1464; the second at Hexham, a few days later. They never held up their heads again. Margaret escaped to her father's court, where she passed a few years of uneasy repose, while Henry, betrayed by a monk of Abingdon, was delivered into the hands of Edward, and committed a close prisoner to the Tower.

Secure as he believed himself to be in the extirpation of his enemies, Edward soon began to indulge his natural disposition, in which were strangely mixed up the love of pleasure, and a reckless and wanton cruelty. His beautiful person and elegant manners, rendered him an especial favourite with the fair sex; and he permitted no ties of religion or honour to stand between him and the accomplishment of his most unworthy wishes.

But popular as he unquestionably was in the metropolis, the nation at large was far from satisfied. Repeated insurrections broke out, which occasioned him some uneasiness; but which he repressed, and punished with ruthless severity, so long as he could count upon the services of the great nobles. In an evil hour, however, he gave deadly umbrage to the most distinguished among these, one to whom he was indebted for his throne, which he had ample reason afterwards to repent. He had made up his mind to confirm the revolution, by espousing some foreign princess, and the earl of Warwick had engaged for him the hand of Bona, the daughter of the duke of Savoy, and sister to the queen of France. Obeying the impulse of a sudden passion, Edward at once sacrificed this alliance, and mortally offended the great chief whom he had employed as his ambassador. While hunting in the forest of Grafton, near Stoney Stratford, he chanced to meet a young lady, by whose attractions his susceptible temperament was instantly affected. She was the daughter of Jacquetta of Luxemburg, by her second husband Sir Richard Woodville, a private gentleman, who, soon after this adventure, was created earl of Rivers. The lady herself, though still very young, had been already married to Sir Thomas Gray, a gallant knight, who fell at the second battle of St. Alban's while fighting in the Lancastrian ranks. But this circumstance weighed little with the amorous prince; who, finding the widow proof against corruption, made an offer of his hand. It was accepted, and a clandestine marriage took place; which was avowed after the victory of Hexham, and the queen crowned together with her husband.

Warwick, surnamed the *king-maker*, was too well aware of his own value, readily to forgive this slight; but when he beheld the Woodvilles promoted to places of honour and emolument, and their sons and

daughters married into the best families, his jealousy, not less than his vanity, became inflamed. He intrigued with the king's brother, the duke of Clarence, to whom the advancement of the Woodvilles was also distasteful, and gave to him, in defiance of Edward's remonstrances, the hand of his daughter. Frequent quarrels and pretended reconciliations ensued, which terminated in an open rupture, and the denunciation, by royal authority, of Warwick and Clarence as traitors. Both sides now took up arms, but Warwick and Clarence, permitting their partisans to be overthrown in detail, were forced to flee the country, and seek an asylum in France. They were well received by Louis, who supplied all their wants, and forwarded, with diligence, a treaty of reconciliation, into which Warwick immediately entered, with queen Margaret. It was accordingly arranged, that another effort should be made to restore Henry to freedom; that he should be replaced upon the throne; that Edward, Margaret's son, should marry Warwick's daughter; and that, in failure of issue by the princess, the crown, at his demise, should devolve on the duke of Clarence.

These matters being settled to the satisfaction of all concerned, except the duke of Clarence, who felt that his interests were entirely overlooked, Warwick made haste to concert measures with his brothers and friends at home, all of whom undertook to join his standard at a convenient season. To favour his descent upon the southern coast, a mock rebellion was got up in the north, which caused Edward to denude the capital entirely of troops; so that when, on the 13th of September, 1470, the malecontents landed at Plymouth, there was no one to oppose them. They pushed rapidly towards London, their numbers swelling as they went, and Henry was proclaimed amid the applause of a giddy multitude, always, and under all circumstances, delighted with change. This done, Warwick and his

troops marched into Yorkshire, where the king was using every exertion to assemble his retainers. When they reached Doncaster, their army fell not short of sixty thousand men; while of the troops, inferior in point of numbers, which attended the king, a large portion were disaffected. The consequences were not different from what might have been anticipated. Edward, alarmed before day by the reported desertion of lord Montague, and of the corps of which he was at the head, lost all confidence in his army; and escaping on horseback to Lynn, embarked on board of a merchant-brig, and fled to Holland. Immediately he was declared a traitor, by a parliament convoked in Henry's name; his estates forfeited, and his honours taken away; while all the sentences which had been passed during what was termed his usurpation were reversed. It is, however, but justice to the dominant faction to record, that very little blood was spilt in revenge of ancient injuries. The only nobleman who suffered, indeed, was the earl of Worcester, whose cruelties, while he held the office of constable, had acquired for him the title of butcher, and the hatred of the people.

The reception which awaited the fugitive Edward at the court of the duke of Burgundy, was agreeable to the cautious policy on which the duke usually acted, that is to say, in public; the latter affected to recognise the existing state of things in England, while he privately supplied his brother-in-law with money and ships. Of these Edward made such good use, that in the month of March following, he was enabled to land at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, at the head of fifteen hundred soldiers, with whom he began a rapid but cautious march towards London. At first the country-people held back from him, and he was compelled, on several occasions, to disavow all intention of unsettling the government; but as he proceeded, his adherents acquired more courage, and his army, in which the

duke of Clarence was again become a leader, had swelled to the amount of sixty thousand men. He entered the capital unopposed, and was again proclaimed king. But his dangers were not yet over: Warwick, at the head of a formidable force, moved upon his rear; and the king hurried forth to meet and to give him battle. On the 14th of April this decisive rencounter took place at Barnet, already memorable as the site of more than one engagement. It ended in the death of Warwick, and the irretrievable discomfiture of his soldiers.

On the very day which witnessed this great event, queen Margaret landed at Plymouth, bringing in her train a corps of French auxiliaries. She was preparing to hasten her march, when intelligence of the fall of Warwick, and of the destruction of his army, was communicated to her. In utter despair she fled to the sanctuary of Beaulieu; but the Lancastrian lords, who still remained faithful to the cause, induced her to quit that asylum, conducted her to Bath, and again raised forces. Edward was not slow in seeking them. At Tewkesbury he arrived in sight of their position, which they had intrenched with great care, and at an early hour in the morning of the 4th of May, led his people to the assault. Somerset, who commanded the queen's army, drove back the storming parties; and perceiving that confusion prevailed in their ranks, sallied out in his turn; but he was deserted by lord Wenlock, who, from cowardice or treachery, held back, and, being in his turn defeated, found it impossible to rally. He beat out, with his own hand, the brains of the traitor, and, seeing that the rout could not be stayed, quitted the field.

The queen with her son fell into the hands of the victors; Somerset, and others of the principal officers, took shelter in a church. Of the queen Edward took no heed. He gave her in charge to a proper escort, and

calling the young prince to his presence, haughtily demanded why he had presumed to enter his realm in arms. The youth boldly, but imprudently, replied, "I came to preserve my father's crown, and my own inheritance." Edward was barbarous enough to strike the boy in the face with his gauntlet; upon which Clarence and Gloucester, or it may be their attendants, despatched him with their swords. Nor was the fate of Somerset and his unfortunate companions more mild. For two days the sanctity of the building preserved their lives; but on the third, a band of armed men burst into the church; and the fugitives being dragged forth to a scaffold, which had been erected hard by, were, without even the mockery of a trial, beheaded.

Edward, after these foul murders, returned to London, where Margaret and her unfortunate husband were committed prisoners to the Tower. The former was soon ransomed by her relative, the king of France; and passed her latter years in obscurity at his court. The latter survived his captivity but a few weeks. How or when he died is not accurately known. Common rumour has attributed his death to violence, and Richard duke of Gloucester, the king's younger brother, is said to have perpetrated the crime; but for these tales there seems to be but doubtful authority, if, indeed, there be any authority at all. He expired, however, whatever might be the immediate cause, unattended; and was buried with as little show of sorrow, as his weak, and therefore mischievous, career entitled him to receive.

The remainder of Edward's history embraces little else than a detail of cruelties and intrigues, of meannesses not often paralleled in the proceedings of a crowned head, and of ostentatious preparations against enterprises which were never seriously designed. Among the acts of tyranny of which he was guilty, the

treatment of his brother, the duke of Clarence, deserves especial record. Doubtless the relatives had never sincerely forgiven the wrongs which they had mutually inflicted and received; but there was an apparent amity between them, when the king, during a hunting-match at Yarrow-park, killed a white buck, which was an especial favourite of the lord of the manor, one Thomas Burdett. Burdett, in the first transport of rage, expressed a wish, that "the buck's horns were in the belly of him who killed it." The rash words were reported to the king, who caused the imprudent utterer to be instantly imprisoned and put to death. It chanced that Clarence had a particular favour for Burdett; and, with natural warmth, reproached his brother with tyranny for having so dealt with him. Clarence himself was forthwith committed to the Tower, and being condemned on a charge of high-treason, he was quietly put out of the way;—if we may credit the tales of the times, by being drowned in a butt of Malmsey.

While thus giving loose to his more vindictive passions, the king put no curb upon other propensities, to the indulgence of which he sacrificed the peace of many honourable families, and ultimately his own health and even his life. At the same time, he affected to revive the ancient claims of his family upon the crown of France, and made a show of arms, only that he might extract from the politic Louis repeated gratuities in money. He became, indeed, at last, as well as many of his chief counsellors, a regular pensioner on the court of Paris; which likewise amused him with empty professions of a desire to contract a marriage between his daughter and the Dauphin. It is said that the discovery of this cheat (for Louis never designed it to be other) operated upon the irascible prince like a poisoned draught. How far the tale

deserves credence may admit of a doubt; but it is certain that he died suddenly, the slave of the lowest vices, on the 9th of April, 1483.

Edward the Fourth lived to the age of forty-one, and swayed the sceptre, reckoning from his first proclamation as king, twenty-two years. His reign is chiefly memorable for that bloody civil war, of which an account has been given; and which, from the devices on the banners of the contending parties, a red and a white rose, was called the War of the Roses. But there occurred, besides this, one or two events, which, as they mark the progress of the public mind, it may not be unnecessary to particularize. In the first place, the right of electing representatives, or knights of the shire, was limited to such as possessed an unincumbered property in land, of the annual value of forty shillings; a sum equal to almost as many pounds in the nineteenth century. An act of Henry the Fourth had thrown open the franchise to all who held of mesne lords, as well as to the immediate tenants of the crown; and there arose, in consequence, so much confusion and riot, that it was considered necessary to curtail the privilege. Probably the best interests of the country would not have materially suffered, had the spirit of the law, as it held good in Edward's days, pervaded the legislation of more modern times.

In the second place, the growing influence of the commons, though occasionally overshadowed by the terrors of Edward's cruelty, is abundantly manifested on various occasions. Their interference in church-affairs is particularly bold. They petitioned the king that no foreigner should be permitted to hold preferment within the realm; and that in cases of non-residence, the patrons of livings might be permitted to present anew. The king eluded these petitions; but could not prevent them from reviving and giving additional force

to various statutes enacted in earlier times, with a view to curtail the usurpations of the see of Rome.

It is worthy of remark, that in this reign, England was a country of export for corn. Attempts were also made, but without success, to pass a species of navigation-laws; and last, though not least in point of importance, we find that then, for the first time, money was borrowed for the public service, on a parliamentary security. The national debt, therefore, or to speak more correctly, the burden of a national debt, whatever its advantages or disadvantages may be, proves to be of older date than is generally imagined.

EDWARD THE FIFTH.

EDWARD the Fourth left behind him two sons and five daughters. The eldest of the sons, then a youth of thirteen, was immediately proclaimed king, by the title of Edward the Fifth, while the dignity and duties of protector were assigned to his uncle, Richard, duke of Gloucester. At this period the kingdom was torn by factions, different, indeed, in kind, and having a widely different object in view, from those which maintained so long and so deadly a struggle; but each sufficiently powerful, and both sufficiently vindictive, to sow the seeds of much confusion and crime. Of the jealousy entertained of the Woodvilles by the old nobility, mention has already been made. The death of their patron served not to allay this, while it afforded the means of barbarous gratification; and Gloucester was himself too deeply imbued with the passion, to permit these means to escape him. Under the pretext of doing honour to his nephew, who resided with his uncle, lord Rivers, he proceeded into the West, and arresting lord Rivers, soon after he quitted Ludlow Castle, threw him into prison. Young Edward was then conducted, more as a captive than a king, to Lon-

don, where he, and his younger brother, the duke of York, whom Richard also prevailed upon the dowager Queen Elizabeth to intrust to his keeping, were placed in the Tower.

So far Gloucester had been freely aided by many of the most powerful nobility in the land. The duke of Buckingham, indeed, was his ready agent throughout; and lords Stanley and Hastings offered no opposition to measures, which they believed to be directed only against the obnoxious Woodvilles. But when rumours of the illegitimacy of the young princes obtained circulation, all of which were traced, not obscurely, to the protector, these noblemen began to suspect him of designs still more daring. Stanley was the first to take the alarm, which he communicated to Hastings. By what instrumentality Gloucester became aware of this fact does not appear, further than that through a lawyer, named Catesby, he had sounded Hastings, and found him true to the king; but its consequences proved fatal to some of the rebels, and had well-nigh led to the destruction of the whole. During a council which he held in the Tower, on the 13th of June, Gloucester caused Hastings to be arrested, and borne off, before the faces of those present, to instant execution,—while Stanley narrowly escaped death, from a blow with a pole-axe, which one of the soldiers, as if by accident, aimed at his head. That day was not, however, stained by the murder of Hastings alone. Lord Rivers, Sir Thomas Gray and Vaughan, all relatives and adherents of the queen, died upon the scaffold at Pomfret, victims to the jealousy of the very nobleman whom Gloucester had used as a tool, and as a tool now cast aside.

Having followed up these blows by the arrest of lord Stanley, of the archbishop of York, and others of the council, while he courted popularity by the persecution of Jane Shore, one of the least guilty of the late king's many mistresses, Richard conceived that the

moment had arrived, when it would be judicious to develop his plans, by aiming boldly and undisguisedly at the possession of the crown. With this view he caused Dr. Shaw, a popular preacher, to inveigh, in a discourse delivered at Paul's Cross, against the illegitimacy of the young princes; and finding that this expedient produced no acclamation in his own favour, he sent Buckingham to lay his case before the mob, with even less of disguise. Still the populace were silent, till the Lord Mayor, already a party to the plot, set them the example; when a few voices were heard to exclaim, "Long live king Richard!" This was all that Buckingham desired. He hastened to Baynard Castle, where Richard resided, presented to him a deed, executed, as he declared, by the three estates, which contained a formal tender of the crown; and on his affecting to decline the charge, assured him that the people would take no refusal. Apparently overcome by these solicitations, Richard permitted himself to be proclaimed; and avowed his determination to preserve entire the honour and liberties of the great country over whose destinies he was constrained to preside.

RICHARD THE THIRD.

THE first act of Richard's administration was one of extreme cruelty, though, in his circumstances, not different from what might have been expected. He commanded Sir Robert Brackenbury, constable of the Tower, to put the young princes to death; and on that gentleman replying that "he knew not how to dip his hands in blood," desired him to resign to others, for a single night, the keys and custody of the fortress. In complying with this order, it is difficult to say how far Brackenbury deserves blame; though to speak of him as a high-minded person, because he refused himself to

perpetrate a crime, which he made no effort to prevent, is to go very far beyond what the rules of moral justice will sanction. Be that, however, as it may; a fit instrument, in the person of Sir James Tyrrel, was found, who again employed meaner assassins under him, and the poor children were the same night suffocated in their sleep, and buried at the foot of the stair, under a heap of stones. By this foul deed Richard imagined that he had removed the chief obstacle to the permanency of his power. His next measure was to aim at attaching to himself as many partisans as possible, partly by loading with rewards all who had contributed to his rise, partly by conciliating the clergy, and pandering to the prejudices of the rabble.

In the hope which he ventured to entertain of conciliating the body of the people, he was altogether deceived. There never prevailed but one opinion respecting him, and one earnest, though concealed desire, to compass his downfall. His efforts to gratify, and hence to secure the fidelity of his late agents, proved equally futile. The first to desert him was the duke of Buckingham, whether actuated by caprice, by disgust at favours refused, or driven to take the step by apprehensions of personal danger, is uncertain. Whatever the motive might be, however, he soon withdrew from Richard's court, and gave himself up to the arrangement of a plan for the subversion of a throne which he had mainly contributed to rear. There resided at this time in Britany, Henry earl of Richmond, a descendant, through the female line, of John of Gaunt; but the offspring of his second marriage with Catherine Swynford. In strict propriety of speech, the children were not in the line of succession; for the act of parliament, which rendered them legitimate, put in an express exception with reference to that point. But the late wars having cut off all the direct claimants through the house of Lancaster, the

friends of that house had long turned with natural partiality to Richmond. To him, therefore, so soon as the death of the princes became generally known, (and that appears not to have been the case, if, indeed, the crime were actually committed, till after Richard had set out on a progress to the north,) public attention was immediately directed. Buckingham opened with him a negotiation, as did many noblemen and gentlemen in the southern counties. It was arranged that he should invade England, that they should join him with their followers, and that in the event of success, he should marry the princess Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Edward the Fourth, so as to unite in one the rights of the rival families.

A continuance of stormy weather, with other causes, having delayed the coming of Henry, Buckingham, who had ascertained that he was an object of more than suspicion at court, put himself at the head of the movement. He raised an army, and advanced as far as Gloucester. Here a succession of heavy rains had so swollen the river, that the face of the country exhibited the appearance of a huge lake; and his Welsh soldiers, alike unable to push on, and to find subsistence, disbanded themselves, and returned home. Meanwhile Richard was hastening to meet him, and Buckingham, at a distance from every other place of retreat, threw himself on the fidelity of an old servant, named Banister. The traitor betrayed him, and he was led to immediate execution. But Richard, though he returned in triumph to London, and ventured for the first time to call together a parliament; though he obtained from that assembly a formal recognition of his title, an act of bastardy against his brother's children, and of attainder against the earl of Richmond; and though he prevailed upon the Queen Dowager to promise him the hand of her daughter, and made way for the arrangement by poisoning his wife Anne, the

daughter of the earl of Warwick, was far from feeling himself secure in a seat which he had polluted with the foulest crimes. He strove, indeed, to conciliate the people by passing various popular laws. He abolished the practice of benevolences, ordered that justice should be strictly administered; and himself set the example by hearing various causes, in which, as they affected not his own interests, his decisions proved to be equitable. But in the midst of these devices Richmond landed at Milford Haven, and his horizon became instantly overcast. Having been made aware of the projected invasion, though ignorant of the point on which it might fall, he had taken post with an army at Nottingham; and now marched with all speed, to anticipate, by a battle, whatever disaffection might prevail in other quarters. The hostile armies met at Bosworth, in Leicestershire, on the 22d of August,



Great Seal of Richard the Third.

1485; and though very unequally matched, for the one excelled in number, the other in the devotion of its officers to their cause, fought with great fury. But the scale was turned against Richard by a sudden movement on the part of lord Stanley, who, at the head of a separate corps, had hovered about the skirts of the field, as if undecided how to act. His men closed in upon the tyrant just as he had arrived within sword's length of his rival, and piercing him through with many wounds, ended at once his reign and his life. Immediately the royal army took to flight, and Richmond was hailed on the field, Stanley setting the example, as king of England, by the style of Henry the Seventh.

HENRY THE SEVENTH.

THE leaders of the party to which he was mainly indebted for his elevation, had stipulated, as one condition of their engagement in the enterprise, that Henry should take to wife the princess Elizabeth, the eldest daughter and acknowledged heiress of Edward the Fourth; and prudence urged him to fulfil this engagement with as little delay as possible; for his own title to the crown would scarcely endure examination, even by Lancastrians, and the right of conquest was one which it might have been unwise to urge. But Henry had been too long accustomed to regard himself as the head of a faction. His hatred of the Yorkists was extreme, and he could not bear the thought of owing to a connexion with that family, the possession even of the throne, ardently as he desired to possess it. He therefore deferred his marriage till after the ceremony of a coronation had been gone through, and the crown settled by act of parliament in him, and in the heirs of his body lawfully begotten. This done, he gave his hand to Elizabeth. amid the congratulations

of his subjects; though he had considerably marred the grace of the act, by committing to the Tower, two days after his coronation, and detaining in close confinement, Edward Plantagenet, son of the unfortunate duke of Clarence, grandson of the king-maker, and himself earl of Warwick.

Had he been able to restrain the two leading propensities of his nature,—hostility to the house of York, and the love of money,—Henry the Seventh would have probably governed, with honour to himself, a loyal, because a contented people. The former disposition, however, led him to obtain acts of attainder against some of the wealthiest and more powerful of the nobility; the latter impelled him to seize with an eager hand their estates, as they became forfeited. Again, though ambitious of being esteemed an impartial administrator of the laws, it was observed, that under him a partisan of the obnoxious family never escaped conviction if accused, while a Lancastrian had at least the ordinary chances. To his queen, likewise, it was believed that he behaved with great coldness. She did not accompany him in a progress which he made into the north,—the principal seat of her influence,—nor was she exhibited, as the party imagined that she ought to have been, to the admiring gaze of the populace. These circumstances, together with a haughty and reserved deportment, served to alienate, in a serious degree, the good-will of the English people; among whom there were not wanting restless and turbulent spirits, the produce of many years of civil broil, to stir up from time to time seditious movements and rebellions.

The first of these broke out in April, 1486, during the king's progress towards the north. Lord viscount Lovell, one of the nobles whom he had attainted and plundered, put himself at the head of it; but possessing neither courage nor conduct, failed in producing any

impression; and his followers deserted him on reading the king's proclamation. Henry's joy at this event was heightened by the birth, soon afterwards, of a son, to whom he gave the name of Arthur, after the celebrated monarch from whom the house of Tudor pretended to derive their descent. But his general policy continuing unchanged, his enemies beheld the birth of that child with regret, inasmuch as it threatened to perpetuate a dynasty, from which they had ceased to anticipate that any good would result to England. They began, therefore, to look round for a leader, whom they might set up in opposition to the oppressor of the house of York; and the craft of a few, and the credulity of the many, contributed to produce one.

Towards the close of the year, one Richard Simonds, a priest, of Oxford, landed in Dublin, with a boy of about eleven years of age, the son of an obscure craftsman. He presented his ward to the lord-deputy of Ireland as Edward Plantagenet, earl of Warwick; and implored the protection of that nobleman for a young and innocent prince, who, by escaping from the Tower, had avoided a fate similar to that of his unfortunate cousins, the sons of Edward the Fourth. The boy had been well-instructed in the part which it behoved him to play. His person was handsome, his address noble; and he could relate, with apparent accuracy, his adventures at Sheriffhutton, where Warwick was arrested, in the Tower, and during his escape. Now it so happened, that among the English settlers in Ireland, the partisans of the house of York had maintained a decided ascendancy ever since the administration of duke Richard, in the reign of Henry the Sixth. By these, (and the earl of Kildare, the lord-deputy, took the lead,) the two adventurers were cordially welcomed. No inquiry was made how Warwick came to be intrusted to the care of an unknown priest, only twenty-seven years of age; nor was any anxiety

evinced to ascertain whether or not the captive was still in the Tower. The boy was introduced to the nobility of Ireland; and with the universal consent of the populace, proclaimed by the style of Edward the Sixth, king of England and France, and lord of Ireland.

When intelligence of these occurrences reached Henry, he became alarmed; not so much at what had happened, as from his ignorance of what might follow. He published a general amnesty and pardon of past political offences; he conducted the real earl of Warwick from the Tower to St. Paul's, and introduced him to the nobility and the people, and excited by these means a feeling of general contempt for the imposture which was practised in Dublin. His next step was less prudent, because less just. Under the pretext that this unaccountable conspiracy had been got up by the queen-dowager, the fortunes of whose house must have fallen had the plot succeeded, he banished her from court, where she had hitherto resided with honour, and committed her to the custody of the monks of Bermondsey. But the marvellous portions of this tale end not here. The earl of Lincoln, himself in the succession to the throne, who had been treated by Richard as heir-apparent, and received from Henry many marks of confidence, suddenly withdrew to Burgundy, whence, after consulting with lord Lovell and the duchess, he carried over two thousand German veterans to Ireland, and placed himself under the banner of the pretender. At his suggestion Symnel (for so the impostor was called) went through the ceremony of a coronation; after which a landing was effected at Furness, and the standard of York displayed. Henry made haste to crush the rebellion. He engaged the insurgents near Stoke, defeated them with great slaughter, slew Lincoln, and other leaders of note, in the field, and made the pretender, with his priestly

more miserably conducted: but the king was not thereby freed from all apprehensions, nor the people cured of their propensity to rebel. While Henry lay before Boulogne, a merchant-vessel from Lisbon cast anchor at the Cove of Cork, on board of which was a young man, about twenty years of age, of whom no one knew anything. His features were handsome, and his deportment courtly, and a rumour soon began to circulate, that he was Richard, duke of York, the second son of Edward the Fourth, who had somehow escaped from the Tower, at the period of his brother's murder. How the escape had been managed, and where he had resided ever since, were questions either not asked, or answered to the satisfaction of the inquirers,—for, in spite of the ridicule which attached to the memory of Symnel's plot, this new adventurer soon saw himself attended by numerous supporters. The citizens of Cork declared in his favour, and some of the leading Irish nobles followed the example. Nevertheless, no rebellion took place; for the young man, receiving an invitation from the ministers of Charles, suddenly withdrew, and placed himself under the protection of the French court.

It is probable that the reception afforded to that adventurer, and his acknowledgment as the rightful heir to the English throne, contributed not a little to accelerate the arrangement into which Henry had entered with the French monarch. One consequence of the pacification, at all events, was, that the stranger was commanded to quit France; and that he took refuge with the dowager duchess of Burgundy, who received him with open arms, granted him a guard of honour, and surnamed him "the White Rose of England." This conduct revived the alarm of the king, and the hopes of his enemies. Could so near a relative be deceived as to the identity of her kinsman? Would so virtuous a princess countenance an impostor? These

questions were eagerly put on both sides; and both Henry, and those who desired his downfall, adopted every expedient to obtain a satisfactory answer. The result was, that the king's emissaries reported the stranger to be one Peter or Perkin Warbeck, a native of Tournay, who had been originally in the service of Lady Bampton, at Lisbon, and was now a tool in the hands of the indignant duchess of Burgundy. Still Henry was not at ease. He knew that there were persons of rank, who either thought, or affected to think, otherwise, and he adopted a base, but not an unusual method of rendering them powerless. He corrupted certain leaders of the York faction, from whom he received the names of those most deeply implicated in the conspiracy; who were all arrested in one day, tried, and convicted of high-treason. But the destruction even of these sufficed not to allay the king's fears, or to satiate his cupidity. Clifford, his unworthy agent, accused Sir William Stanley himself of a design to promote the cause of the pretended duke of York, and Stanley, in spite of his services at Bosworth, died the death of a traitor.

These harsh proceedings, together with the unaccountable hesitation of the pretender himself, who permitted three years to elapse without seeking to establish his claim, either by legal proof, or by the sword, caused his adherents, both at home and abroad, to relax in their zeal. The Flemings, in particular, whose commerce had received serious interruption, murmured at his sojourn among them, and Margaret was compelled, after supplying him with ships and money, to commit him to the guidance of fortune. He set sail with six hundred followers,—men of lawless habits and broken means,—with whom he endeavoured to effect a landing at Deal. But the gentlemen of Kent had already assembled their retainers; and after losing one hundred and fifty of his band, Warbeck abandoned the enter-

prise. He repaired next to Ireland, but found the natives averse to join him, and at last took shelter in Scotland, where his reception proved eminently cordial. James not only acknowledged him as duke of York, but gave him in marriage the Lady Catherine Gordon, a woman of rank and beauty, not distantly related to himself; after which he assembled an army, and under the pretext of restoring him to the throne, passed the border. It was now, however, too late; and had the case been different, the support of a Scottish army was not at all calculated to gain him adherents among the English. After a profitless inroad, in which the usual amount of excesses were committed, Warbeck returned with his foreign allies, not a single native having responded to his appeals, or taken up arms in his cause.

Abortive as this enterprise proved to be, Henry made it the pretext for obtaining from parliament further supplies, which his agents levied, as was their wont, without mercy. The people of Cornwall, to whom such proceedings were new, broke out into rebellion, and with lord Audley at their head, penetrated as far as Blackheath. But they were defeated at Deptford, and their leaders taken and put to death. This was followed by a second inroad of the Scots, as little decisive as the preceding; after which, under the auspices of the Spanish minister, they made peace with Henry. In a moment, Warbeck saw that his political situation was changed, for James cast him aside with as little ceremony as Charles of France; and taking again to his ships, he landed first at Cork, and ultimately at Whitsand bay in Cornwall. The Cornish-men had not learned wisdom from experience. They rallied round his standard; marched with him to Exeter, and finding themselves unable to force an entrance, pushed on towards Taunton. Henry hastened to meet them; and both sides prepared for battle. But Warbeck's courage

failed him at sight of the royal standard: he secretly quitted his lines the same night, and took sanctuary at Beaulieu. So ended this ridiculous farce; for the insurgents, deserted by their chief, offered little resistance, and the ringleaders being hanged, the rest were dismissed to their homes.

The residue of this adventurer's story is soon told. After standing in the stocks at Westminster and Cheapside, and reading, on both occasions, a confession of his crime, he was sent to the Tower, where, either by accident or design, he contracted an intimacy with the unfortunate earl of Warwick. That young man, who is represented, by a contemporary writer, as having become, through long imprisonment, "a very innocent," was easily persuaded to join him in a plot to escape. They were accused, in consequence, of conspiring to corrupt some of the king's guards, and to disable or destroy the remainder; and a subservient court interpreted the charge to be one of high-treason; they were both convicted, and suffered death,—the former on the 20th of August, the latter on the 28th of November.

In the history of Perkin Warbeck there is one, and only one, circumstance which arrests the attention of the reader, and demands his sympathy. Though convinced of the imposture to which she had been made a party, his beautiful and high-born wife never forsook him; but continued to the last the boundless affection with which she seems to have regarded him on the day of their marriage. To the honour of Henry, too, it ought to be recorded, that he treated her with great forbearance, and even kindness. She fell a prisoner into his hands, after the defeat of the Cornish-men at Taunton; and he placed her about the person of the queen, where she continued, in respectability and comfort, till the period of her mistress's death. But if his behaviour to this high-minded woman be deserving of some praise, his treatment of the harmless and ill-

fated Warwick merits unqualified condemnation. It is true that the pretended friends of that youth proved to be his deadliest enemies,—because, by continually exciting the king's fears, they rendered the innocent object of these fears the object of his hatred also. Still, wretched as even that excuse would have been, Henry could not plead in extenuation of his crime, that it was committed on the impulse of the moment. The murder of Warwick seems to have been premeditated, and was perpetrated at last as the price of an arrangement, which Henry believed to be conducive to the aggrandizement of his family. A treaty of marriage between Prince Arthur and Catherine of Spain had been in progress, which Ferdinand hesitated to conclude while a rival to the throne of England could be set up; and the last male descendant of the Plantagenets was sent to the scaffold, as the readiest method of satisfying the scruples of an over-anxious father. It is no wonder that Catherine, when, on a future occasion, she was repudiated by her selfish husband, exclaimed, "Divorce is a judgment of God, for that my former marriage was made in blood!"

I have said, that a treaty of marriage had long depended between Arthur, Prince of Wales, and Catherine, the fourth daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, king and queen of Spain. The dowry of the young bride was considerable; it amounted to two hundred thousand ducats; but the union proved unfortunate. The prince died within the space of a few months, and the king of Spain became entitled to the restoration of his money. That, however, would have been altogether at variance with Henry's general policy. He determined, at all hazards, to keep the treasure; and accordingly, by virtue of a dispensation from the Pope, completed a fresh alliance with Henry, his second son,—who made to the arrangement all the opposition which a boy of twelve years of age could make. The

same year another marriage was brought about, pregnant in after-times with the best consequences to the whole island. Margaret, the king's eldest daughter, was wedded to James the Fourth, king of Scotland,—a union which gave, in due time, kings to both countries; and of whom the illustrious descendant still occupies a throne, which may God preserve in its integrity to the latest ages!

From this time forth the affairs of Henry continued to flow in one unvaried stream of success. The death of the queen gave him, indeed, some alarm; for his son Henry, now Prince of Wales, began early to exhibit a disposition not to abate one jot of what might be due to his prerogatives. But the child made no direct attack upon the father, who went on oppressing his people with impunity, and maintaining the best relations with foreign powers. He had now, indeed, but one formidable enemy left, namely, the earl of Suffolk, the brother of that lord Lincoln who fell in the battle of Stoke; and who, as nephew to Edward the Fourth, exhibited, on more than one occasion, a disposition to raise again the banner of the white rose. Of him, however, though he had escaped to Flanders, Henry contrived to obtain possession, by means which it would require a more than ordinary degree of sophistry to vindicate. Philip, the son of the emperor Maximilian, who married Joan, the daughter of Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain, was on his passage to Castile, of which, after the demise of Isabella, he became, by virtue of his wife's title, the rightful sovereign. Stress of weather compelled him to seek shelter in Weymouth; and he was immediately, though with every demonstration of respect, made aware that he lay at the king's mercy. He repaired to Windsor; and his personal liberty was granted only on condition that he would surrender Suffolk into the hands of Henry. Beset as he was, Philip refused to

accede to the proposal, till he had received the king's pledge that Suffolk should not be put to death. Henry kept his promise to the ear, but violated its spirit; for Suffolk was committed a close prisoner to the Tower, and his death enjoined upon the king's successor, as a duty which he owed to his country and to his father's last wishes.

Henry survived these transactions about two years, which are not remarkable for the occurrence of any event deserving in this place of particular notice. The invasion of Italy by France had occurred before this time; to which I have not alluded, because it had upon the fortunes of England very little effect. But I may observe here, in passing, that the attempt, bold in anticipation, proved singularly easy of accomplishment, owing to the effeminacy and total disunion of the Italian states. The French army marched from one end of the Peninsula to the other, and returned again across the Alps, only because the king became alarmed at the extent of the combination which was entered into to resist his ambition. In other respects all things, both at home and abroad, proceeded as they had been accustomed to do, till Henry, after long suffering, died of a consumption on the 22d of April, 1509, in the fifty-second year of his age, and twenty-fourth of his reign.

The personal character of this monarch presents a strange mixture of glaring vices and conspicuous virtues. He was active, brave, cautious, and reflecting; yet he never possessed the affections of his subjects, because these excellences were overshadowed by insatiable avarice, and a total disregard to the feelings of others. His public acts, on the other hand, limiting that expression to the general laws which were passed in his reign, contributed largely to the immediate prosperity, and to the ultimate freedom of his country. He permitted the great nobles to alienate their estates

by sale,—he encouraged commerce, and promoted refinement; thus teaching the common people to seek a livelihood in honest industry, and enabling the gentry to get rid of the crowds of idle retainers which had heretofore preyed upon them. The immediate effect of these enactments was undoubtedly to enlarge the prerogative; for there was then no power apart from that of the aristocracy capable of holding the ambition of the crown in check; but its consequences, neither remote nor uncertain, were to rouse the latent energies of the people, and to render them an essential and important party in the administration of public affairs. To the particular laws which he sanctioned, I have no room to advert. Some of these were, doubtless, absurd enough,—such as the prohibition of what was termed usury, or the prohibiting the lender of money from exacting interest for it,—the affixing of stated prices to cloth, caps, hats, and even labourers' wages, &c.; but in general the bent of his legislation was to encourage trade, and to open out to the commons those avenues of advancement and honour which they are now so forward to occupy, to their own and their country's advantage.

The era of Henry the Seventh's reign is memorable for the discovery of America by Columbus; for Cabot's important voyages; for the revival of a taste for polite letters, as exemplified in the writing of Latin, and for the rapid progress of the art of printing. In military tactics, also, the use of fire-arms began to occasion a mighty revolution; and architecture, particularly in church-building, was carried to the summit of perfection. To Henry, too, belongs the honour of laying the foundation of what deserves to be termed the English Navy. Hitherto the kings of England had hired, for military purposes, merchant-vessels, wherever they could find them,—Henry the Seventh built a ship of war at his own cost, which was named after himself,

"the Great Harry," and took it into commission. He left a treasury rich beyond that of any other monarch that ever filled an English throne; and of which the contents were too often soiled by the blood of the father, and the tears of the widow and the orphan.

CHAPTER XIV.

HENRY THE EIGHTH—HIS POPULARITY—WAR WITH FRANCE—CARDINAL WOLSEY—THE KING'S DIVORCE—FALL OF WOLSEY—THE REFORMATION—ANNE BOLEYN BEHEADED—JANE SEYMOUR—BIRTH OF PRINCE EDWARD AND DEATH OF THE QUEEN—ANNE OF CLEVES—CATHERINE HOWARD—HER EXECUTION—CATHERINE PARR—SUPPRESSION OF THE MONASTERIES—THE KING'S CRUEL-TIES—WAR WITH SCOTLAND AND FRANCE—HENRY'S DEATH—EFFECTS OF HIS REIGN.

[A. D. 1509 to A. D. 1546.]

It would be difficult to imagine a combination of circumstances more favourable than those which attended Henry the Eighth, on his accession to the throne. Young, brave, accomplished, handsome, and uniting in his own person the claims of the rival houses, he lost nothing in public esteem, from the contrast which his manners presented to those of his gloomy and avaricious predecessor. The populace greeted him wherever he went with cheers; the nobility, pleased with the grace and freedom of his manners, professed for him unbounded devotion. His court became the scene of constant gaiety and amusement; and the most sanguine expectations were formed, as to the prosperity which must attend the government of so able and accomplished a monarch.

The first acts of Henry's administration tended not to destroy this illusion. He retained in his service the ablest of his father's counsellors; and, by a stretch of power, then but too common, sacrificed to the popular indignation two of the chief instruments of his father's rapacity. The military preparations, also, in which he soon began to indulge, were far from creating uneasiness;

for the English people still indulged in dreams of French conquest, and were ready to support their sovereign on all occasions in a war with that country. Yet amid so many favourable symptoms, there were not wanting occasional outbursts of the temper which distinguished the king in after-years. He was impetuous, headstrong, and overbearing; and his very pleasures were, more than once, coloured by a lamentable disregard to the feelings of those around him.

Mention has been made of the betrothal of Prince Arthur to the lady Catherine of Spain, and of the contract into which, subsequently to his brother's demise, Henry had been induced to enter with the widow. He seems to have all along entertained serious scruples, touching the legality of that engagement; which, however, yielded to the advice of his ministers, and to considerations of state; and the marriage was solemnized within six weeks of the death of Henry the Seventh, with great pomp and rejoicing. This done, he entered with eagerness into the views of his father-in-law, sanctioned and encouraged as they were by the approval of the Pope, of which it was the object to check the growing power, and restrain the boundless ambition, of France. For Louis the Twelfth, after surmounting the barrier of the Alps, and making himself master of the Milanese, began to extend his views to the subjugation of the whole of Italy. In the beginning, indeed, the resources of the French monarch had been turned, by Pope Julius the Second, to his own purposes. The republic of Venice, then the great emporium of trade with the East, had roused the hostility of the pontiff, who united in alliance against the mistress of the Adriatic, the emperor Maximilian, Louis of France, and Ferdinand of Spain. But the league of Cambray, as this combination of crowned heads was called, carried in its bosom the seeds of dissension, which

brought forth abundant fruit, so soon as the ends of the sovereign pontiff had been attained. After humbling Venice, the ambition of Julius took a wider and a nobler scope; he desired to expel all strangers from the soil of Italy, and he strove to accomplish his purpose, by exciting jealousy among his allies, and turning them one against another.

Henry had lent his name to the league of Cambray, without taking any very deep interest in the matter; he entered zealously into the views of the Pope; who complained of the insults which were offered to his spiritual authority by Louis, and the schismatical council of Lyons, of which he was the patron.

A plan of campaign was accordingly formed, and an English army sent to Fontarabia, for the purpose of reconquering from thence the provinces of Guienne and Gascony, the ancient patrimony of the house of Plantagenet. But Ferdinand had other objects in view than the enlargement of the power of England, even at the expense of France; he, therefore, kept his allies cooped up in the town where they first disembarked, while he himself overran Navarre, and attached it to his own dominions. Nor was Henry more fortunate in his operations by sea. An action took place between the fleets of the rival powers, in which both admirals perished; but the French escaped into Brest, where the English were unable to molest them. Still the king experienced no diminution of his military ardour, nor any disposition to abandon his schemes of conquest. He had exhausted the wealth which his father bequeathed to him, but he called a parliament together, and he received both from it and from the convocation, which sat at the same time, liberal grants for the prosecution of the war.

There occurred, in the spring of 1513, a second affair at sea, in which Sir Edward Howard, the English admiral, fell a sacrifice to his own rashness. This was

followed by the embarkation of Henry, at the head of an army of five-and-twenty thousand men, with which he invested Terouanne, and after defeating a force which endeavoured to relieve it, reduced both it and Tournay. Meanwhile the Scots, who had made gigantic preparations to support their ancient allies, passed the Tweed, and were defeated in the great battle of Flodden, with the loss of their prince, and the flower of their nobility. But brilliant as these successes were, they led to no important results. The Scots desired peace; and Henry, swayed, perhaps, by his relationship to their young king and his mother, granted it on easy terms; while the death of Julius, and the accession of Leo the Tenth, took away the main-spring of the confederacy against France. The consequence was, that through the instrumentality of the duke of Longueville, then a prisoner in London, Louis was enabled to accommodate his quarrel with England. Tournay was permitted to remain in the hands which had won it, a million of crowns were promised as an indemnity for the expenses of the war, Cardinal de la Pole, of whom I shall have occasion to speak by and by, was commanded to quit France, and Louis received in exchange the king's young sister in marriage, whom, before the expiration of the year, he left in a state of widowhood.

Some time prior to these events, there had risen into power one of the most remarkable men of whom the annals of England make mention. Thomas Wolsey, the son, according to one account, of a butcher, according to another, of a private gentleman of Ipswich, after passing through a regular course of education at Oxford, took orders, and was in due time presented by his patron, the marquis of Dorset, to the rectory of Lymington. Strange tales have been told of his irregular mode of life while residing on his living, but to these little credit appears to be due;

inasmuch as a drunkard and brawler would scarcely be promoted, as was Wolsey's fate, to fill the office of domestic chaplain in his sovereign's family. By Henry the Seventh he was employed in several delicate negotiations, throughout which he conducted himself with great propriety, and he would have doubtless been advanced to higher dignities in the church, had not the king's death intervened. Wolsey's preferment, though deferred, was not arrested. Fox, bishop of Winchester, took him by the hand; he introduced him to Henry the Eighth, and the pleasant disposition, and gay and reckless manners of the priest, soon rendered him an especial favourite with the young king. He became the companion of Henry's looser hours; he gradually insinuated himself into his confidence, and partly by yielding to his humours, partly by giving a bent to his policy, established over the royal mind a prodigious influence. Henry promoted him rapidly from one dignified station to another. He became successively, bishop of Tournay and of Lincoln, and archbishop of York. With the last see, he held, *in commendam*, the abbey of St. Alban's, and the bishopric, first of Durham, and afterwards of Winchester; whilst the pope himself, anxious to secure the friendship of the king, created his favourite cardinal, and vested him with more than the common authority of a legate. Nor did Wolsey's honours end with this. On the resignation, by archbishop Warham, of the great seal, Henry bestowed it upon Wolsey, who discharged the duties of chancellor with so much ability and candour, as to obtain the applause even of his enemies.

Had Wolsey possessed but a moderate share of prudence, his name would have probably come down to us, associated with fewer contumelies than now attach to it; but he was not more covetous of wealth and honours, than he was prodigal in the expenditure of the one, and magnificent in the display of the other.

His train consisted of eight hundred servants, of whom many were knights and gentlemen; and he numbered among his pages and attendants some of the children of the first nobility. To the professors of science, of literature, and the arts, he was a liberal patron; he bestowed upon Christ Church in Oxford all the wealth of which it can boast, and founded a college in his native town, as a school of preparation for its students. Hampton-Court palace he built and furnished, and then presented it to the king. All these were among the innocent, if not laudable uses, to which his greatness was applied; in other respects he was not so discreet. Having obtained a commission from the Pope, which invested him with extraordinary powers in the management of affairs of conscience, he put no limits to the severity with which he exercised these powers. Laymen, as well as ecclesiastics, felt the weight of his more than inquisitorial authority, till the archbishop of Canterbury was forced to admit, "This man is drunk with too much prosperity." Under such circumstances, no one can wonder that he should have become an object of envy and dislike to the nobles in general, and that an opportunity of undermining his influence should have been sought with an avidity, which could not fail, sooner or later, to attain its object.

At the death of Louis, in 1515, Francis the First had succeeded to the throne of France; the demise of Ferdinand, in the following year, left that of Spain open to the Archduke Charles. One of the earliest measures of these young and powerful princes was to put an end to the war which had so long devastated Italy; and to secure, by a contract of marriage, the prospect of a mutual good understanding for many years to come. But the death of Maximilian, which occurred in 1519, threw again the apple of discord between them, by calling fully into play the passions of jealousy

and ambition, by which they were alike influenced. They became rival candidates for the imperial crown, and spared neither bribes nor promises in the prosecution of their object. How the contest was carried on, it is not my province to relate; but its termination in favour of Charles, excited the deepest indignation of Francis; who began immediately to prepare for war on an extended scale. He solicited the alliance of Henry, and received numerous assurances of good-will; but Henry was in the hands of his chancellor, and his chancellor had been already won over to the opposite side, by a pledge from the emperor, of support, whenever he might become a candidate for the apostolic crown. Still a meeting took place between Ardres and Guisnes, at which both the kings and their nobles displayed extraordinary magnificence; and a fortnight was consumed in feats of arms, in banquets, and rejoicings. But the emperor had anticipated the designs of his rival, by paying court to the English monarch at Canterbury. Henry returned home, more and more determined not to break with his nephew. He consented, indeed, to act as arbiter between them; and despatched Wolsey, with full powers to hear and decide upon their respective claims: but, the decision of the cardinal failing to give satisfaction, the war was carried on with vigour, and Henry, at the instigation of Wolsey, embraced the side of Charles, and again made preparations to invade France.

This second contest, though it involved, as usual, a breach with Scotland, proved not, as far as England was concerned, more satisfactory than the former. The duke of Suffolk, it is true, conducted a predatory expedition almost to the gates of Paris; and Surrey burned Jedburgh, and laid waste the open country around it. But fierce reprisals in Northumberland and Durham rendered the belligerents on this side desirous of an

accommodation, which was in due time effected, without any serious advantage to either party. In like manner the duke of Suffolk, indifferently supported by his allies, found his troops waste away through sickness, and withdrew into winter-quarters, chagrined and disappointed. These things were not without their effect on the mind of Henry; who discovered in his parliament extreme unwillingness to vote fresh supplies, and in his people a decided resolution not to advance any funds under the odious title of benevolences. It was with Wolsey, however, that a disposition to withdraw from the league originated; and he, as may be imagined, was swayed by very different motives from those which operated upon the king. At the death of Leo, in 1520, he had appeared as a candidate for the papacy, confident in the promised support of the emperor. He failed; and Adrian, originally the tutor of Charles, afterwards his viceroy in Spain, obtained the tiara. Adrian, however, filled the chair of St. Peter only till 1523; and Wolsey again urged his pretensions, which were again overlooked. His pride took the alarm; and though for some time afterwards he continued to flatter the emperor, all his attachment was in reality transferred to Francis. Meanwhile, Italy had been the scene of many a fierce conflict, in which victory leaned sometimes to one side, sometimes to the other, till the battle of Pavia placed Francis a captive in the hands of his rival, and stripped France of all her Cisalpine conquests. Then, indeed, the vain idea of reasserting his claim to the vacant throne dwelt for a brief space in Henry's mind, and induced him to make advances to a closer alliance with the emperor. But the coldness, perhaps the haughtiness, with which these advances were met, gave great umbrage; while his pecuniary difficulties, which the royal prerogative proved inadequate to relieve, filled up the measure of his disgust.

Henry broke off all communication with Charles; and contracted, on very favourable terms, a separate treaty with the French.

To describe the events which ensued upon this change of policy,—the treatment of Francis as a prisoner, his release, his violation of the engagements into which he had entered, and the renewal of the war in Italy, would carry me far beyond the limits of my present undertaking. I must be content, therefore, to state, that of a new league against the emperor, formed under the auspices of the pope, and thence called most clement and most holy, Henry put himself at the head; and that he received, as his reward, an estate in Naples valued at thirty thousand crowns a year, as well as a pension of ten thousand crowns to his minister. It may, indeed, be remarked, once for all, that from every treaty into which the king of England entered, Wolsey failed not to derive more or less of pecuniary advantage; for his influence over the royal mind being rated almost beyond the truth, to purchase his good offices was esteemed the readiest method of securing the friendship of his master. At home, likewise, men were not unapt to attribute to his counsels oppressive and arbitrary proceedings, concerning which all that can be said is, that he was unable to prevent them. The death of Buckingham, for example, who, in 1521, perished on the scaffold, in consequence of the unguarded language in which he had ventured to condemn the pageantries and follies of the field of the Cloth of Gold, was laid, without any show of pretence, to the cardinal's charge; and, though it may be true that he endeavoured too much to govern without the aid of parliaments, it is more than probable that he only obeyed, in this, the mandates of his imperious master. Be this, however, as it may, Wolsey early acquired and retained no common share of public odium; for which the haughtiness of his demeanour,

not less than the unconstitutional nature of his proceedings, may, perhaps, be blamed. But it is high time to revert to certain mighty changes which were already in progress, and amid which the fabric of Wolsey's power was destined to crumble into dust.

Allusion has been made, more than once, to the growing discontent of the laity with the arrogant pretensions of the See of Rome, and the unbecoming, and in many instances immoral lives of the popish clergy. From the days of Wickliffe these sentiments had never been without their professors in England; while in the valleys of the Alps, in Bohemia, and elsewhere, there had existed from the earliest times thousands and tens of thousands of pious men, over whose minds the chain of popish tyranny had never been drawn. Still there needed some direct stimulus, not less than some bold and honest leader, to give to the spirit of religious inquiry a wider channel of action, and to guide it in its course through the difficulties and dangers with which it was sure to be beset. In the beginning of the sixteenth century the stimulus was given, and the necessary leader appeared. Martin Luther, a native of Eisleben, in the county of Mansfeldt, and a monk of the order of St. Augustine, placed himself in the breach, and denounced the evils of a system, which at once put in shackles the right of private judgment, and conferred upon one man authority to release another from the consequences of his sins, even before those sins should have been committed. It is not within my present province to detail the progress of this most important of all the revolutions which have ever occurred in the history of the Christian world. My limits will only permit me to say, that the reformed doctrines spread far and wide through Germany, Flanders, the north of Europe, France, Spain, and even Italy; and that if they failed to supplant the old tenets in most of the enlightened countries of the world, the failure

is to be attributed rather to the political faults of too many among their teachers, than to any superior skill or erudition displayed by the advocates of the opposite opinions.

There were many causes at work, to render England a fruitful soil for the growth of the reformed faith. Not to speak of the ancient jealousies between king and pope, laic and ecclesiastic, nor to give more than their due weight to the cutting satires with which Chaucer had lashed the vices of the monks, Wickliffe had left behind him, in his translations of various portions of the New Testament, a treasure from which multitudes, in defiance both of civil laws and church censures, continued to derive consolation in their sorrows, and instruction in their ignorance.

Sir Thomas More, also,—the future champion and martyr of popery,—had contributed to unsettle men's minds, by the publication, in 1513, of his *Utopia*, a work of infinite merit, though liable to the serious objections, that the principle which it seeks to inculcate is pushed to a dangerous extreme. Still the hostility of Wolsey, and the bigoted zeal of his master, opposed serious impediments to the progress of truth. The former, instigated more, perhaps, by policy, than religion, put to death several unhappy Lollards; the latter wielded his pen against Luther in a treatise, which secured the gratitude of the pope, and obtained for its writer the proud title of "Defender of the Faith." But a work which is not of man, man's hostility serves not to arrest, while, as in the instance before us, he sometimes becomes the unconscious instrument of advancing the very cause, which he once laboured to retard.

It was stated, some time ago, that at the period of his marriage with Catherine of Spain, Henry entertained serious scruples touching the legality of that proceeding. The advice of his counsellors, however,

supported by a papal bull, sufficed to allay these misgivings, and for a space of eighteen years, he treated his consort with every external mark of kindness and attention. During this interval she bore him several children, of whom one only, the princess Mary, survived. But Catherine was subject to bodily infirmities; there was a great disparity between her age and that of her royal husband, and the latter began, by degrees, to experience towards her an alienation of feeling, which he was too selfish to combat or to conceal. It was at this unlucky juncture, that the queen received into her family as one of her maids of honour, a young lady of surpassing beauty, and attractive manners, Anne, the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, and granddaughter of the duke of Norfolk. To see, and to fall in love with this fair damsel, were circumstances, in Henry's case, consequent one upon the other. He paid to her the most assiduous court; strove, as his letters indicate, for a whole year, to undermine her virtue, and finding that his suit made no progress, became fretful and uneasy. Catherine, as standing between him and the object of his desires, became daily more and more distasteful. His doubts as to the validity of their marriage revived, and he turned all his thoughts to the most ready means of dissolving a connexion, unlawful, perhaps, from the beginning, but to which he was now bound, by every principle of generosity and honour.

The first person to whom he applied in his distress was Wolsey; whom he found prompt to encourage the religious doubts under which he professed to labour. Supported by the opinion of the cardinal, he made an appeal to the archbishop, and other prelates of the church, all of whom, with the exception of Fisher, bishop of Rochester, declared, under their hands and seals, that the marriage with his brother's widow was contrary to the laws of God. So far, all things had

gone according to the king's wishes, nor in the next step which he deemed it expedient to take, was he less successful. The pope, when applied to for a divorce, exhibited every disposition to meet the king's wishes; for Henry took care to rest his petition on such grounds as should seem to indicate no distrust of the spiritual authority of the supreme pontiff. But his holiness was then a prisoner in the hands of the emperor; and he feared to provoke the hostility of one so powerful, by casting dishonour upon a member of his family. All, therefore, which he dared to do, was done; he granted a commission to inquire into the validity of the king's marriage, and of the dispensation by virtue of which it had been solemnized; and appointing Wolsey to act in conjunction with the archbishop of Canterbury, or any other bishop, he imagined that he had left the game entirely in Henry's hands.

Had the ulterior views of the king corresponded with those of the cardinal, the point at issue would have been speedily adjusted; but this proved not to be the case. Wolsey was very willing to dissolve the marriage with Catherine, because he knew that an irreparable breach would thus be created between the king and the emperor; but he desired to follow up this stroke of policy, by negotiating another union between Henry and one of the princesses of France. As soon, however, as he discovered that the king would not only not assent to this, but that he intended to wed a lady, suspected, not without cause, of a leaning to the reformed tenets, the cardinal became alarmed. He permitted the business of the divorce to languish; he affected to distrust the extent of his own powers, he applied for, and obtained, the assistance of the cardinal Campeggio, to whom, as the pope's nuncio, he paid ostentatious deference. Yet it is no more than justice to the worldly wisdom of this extraordinary man, to say, that if in the beginning he with-

stood the king's wishes, he was sincere in his later endeavours to promote them. He became convinced, from Henry's manner, that whatever might be the issue of the process in other respects, his own ruin must inevitably ensue upon the failure of Anne's pretensions.

Disgusted, with what he was pleased to term the duplicity of the pope and the commissioners, Henry began to look around for some more speedy method of attaining his wishes. That object was uppermost in his mind, when accident introduced to his notice a man, timid, perhaps, even to a fault, but eminent above all his contemporaries for genuine piety, unaffected humility, and devotion to the cause of truth. It chanced that the king, being upon a journey, passed a night at Waltham Cross; and that two of his attendants slept at the house of a Mr. Cressy, where the conversation, during supper, turned upon the leading topic of the day, the royal divorce. There was present on that occasion, a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, whom the plague had driven from the university, and who, being related to Mr. Cressy's wife, had fixed his residence in the family, and discharged the duties of tutor to the children. The opinion of the academician was asked, and given. It amounted to this; that the question at issue affected the true interpretation of Scripture, and was one, of which learned men and the universities would be the fittest judges, because, "the bishop of Rome had no such authority, as whereby he might dispense with the word of God." This sentiment was reported to the king; he expressed himself highly pleased with it, and having called its author into his presence, treated him ever after with the utmost respect. The academician was no other than Cranmer.

Acting upon the suggestion thus adroitly given, Henry caused a case to be made out, which he em-

ployed Cranmer to submit to the consideration of the most distinguished universities, both at home and abroad. The opinions of almost all, with the honourable exception of the Protestant Universities of Germany, were against the legality of the marriage; nevertheless, the commissioners continued to procrastinate, and a bill was at length obtained, requiring the parties to attend personally at Rome, in order that the Pope might himself decide on the matter. There needed only some such rash proceeding as this to fill to overflowing the cup of Henry's wrath. Wolsey was forthwith commanded to resign the great seal. Articles of impeachment were exhibited against him; he was declared to have incurred the pains of a *præmunire*, and with all his goods and chattels to lie at the king's mercy. Still there seems to have been a wavering in Henry's sentiments, which occasionally reverted with something like their old affection to the fallen favourite. His princely residence of York Place, now Whitehall, was, indeed, taken from him, and he was banished to Esher, a country-house belonging to the see of Winchester. But in February, 1530, after having been some time without the common conveniences of life, he again received marks of royal favour. He was permitted to retire to York, where, by the affability of his address, and a display of prodigal hospitality, he obtained a popularity which he was not destined long to enjoy. Having been arrested in the depth of winter, and carried as far as Leicester, on his way to London, a constitution enfeebled by disease and anxiety gave way. "I am come," said he, to the head of the convent, "to lay my bones among you;" and he deceived neither the abbot nor himself. He died on the 30th of November, 1530, a remarkable instance of the instability of human prosperity, and of the true value of wealth and power, which are neither acquired nor exercised in subervience to the dictates of religious principle, and sound

and Christian morality. His last words may be cited as eminently characteristic of the man. "If I had served God as diligently as I have done the king, he would not have given me over in my gray hairs. This is the just reward that I must receive for the pains I have taken to do him service, not regarding my service to God."

The death of Wolsey appeared to dissolve the last tie which had hitherto bound the king to the popish communion, and proved the prelude for the adoption of other and more effectual measures, for the accomplishment of the single object which he desired to attain. Wolsey had been adjudged liable to the pains of a *præmunire*, on an old statute which prohibited the exercise of a legantine authority within the realm. The same statute was now brought to bear against the clergy in general, who were glad to purchase immunity by the payment of a heavy fine, as well as by acknowledging the king to be the protector and supreme head of the church of England, as far as might be permitted by the laws of Christ. This occurred in 1531; and in the year following, a still more decided step was taken. A law was passed, which prohibited the payment of first-fruits to the pope, and decreed that any censures which might emanate from the court of Rome, on account of such prohibition, should be disregarded. In like manner, appeals to Rome in causes of matrimony, divorces, wills, and other suits cognizable in ecclesiastical courts, were forbidden, while the oath of canonical obedience to the supreme pontiff, which the bishops had been in the habit of taking, was declared incompatible with the duty which they owed as subjects to the crown of England. These latter proceedings, however, which rendered a reconciliation with the holy see next to impossible, were but the consequences of an act, by the performance of which Henry settled the great question of the divorce in a very summary manner. Early in January, 1533, he married Anne Boleyn, in

private, and on the 12th of April following she being then far advanced in pregnancy, publicly avowed her as his wife. This was followed, strangely enough, by the opening of a court, empowered to inquire into the validity of his previous marriage; which was pronounced by Cranmer, now promoted to the see of Canterbury, to have been, from the first, contrary to the will of God; and, as a necessary consequence, to be null and void. The unfortunate Catherine was immediately degraded by act of parliament; her daughter was declared to be illegitimate, and the succession was confirmed to the children of Anne Boleyn, whose coronation was soon afterwards performed with great splendour.

The first act in this mighty drama was now complete. Allegiance to the see of Rome was renounced, both by the king and the people, and both king and people were threatened with the pains of excommunication. Yet it cannot be said that any serious advance were made in what alone deserves to be termed the Reformation. Henry was still a bigot to most of the doctrines, in defence of which he had written. It was, for example, declared heretical to deny the bodily presence in the communion; to advocate the lawfulness of marriage by the clergy; to contend for the reception of the sacrament in both forms by the laity, to abjure purgatory, auricular confession, the adoration of the saints, the seven sacraments, or any other dotage which the church of Rome had engrafted upon the Gospel of Christ. Even the reading of the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue was, for a while, prohibited; and when sanctioned at last, the privilege was restricted to the better-educated classes of society. In one word, Henry's reforms, considered as the removal of the hay, chaff, and stubble, which had so long, and so fatally overlaid the truth, may safely be taken as amounting

the country, lamentable in the extreme. The monks, hitherto the principal owners of the tithe, had given, in too many instances, a wretched stipend to the vicars; "but now," says Henry Brinklow, in his *Address to the Members of both Houses of Parliament*, "there is no vicar at all, but the farmer is vicar and parson altogether; and only an old cast-away monk or friar, which can scarcely say his matins, is hired for twenty or thirty shillings, meat and drink; yea, in some places, for meat and drink alone, without any wages. I know, and not I alone, but twenty thousand more know, more than five hundred vicarages and parsonages, thus well and gospelly served, after the new gospel of England." Then followed the presentation of worn-out menials, of the keepers of taverns, and other illiterate and immoral men, to benefices, which would not suffice to supply with the necessities of life persons of a liberal education; while in many instances, the churches were converted into barns, and all that had been permitted to remain of the monasteries and convents into stables and cow-sheds.

The immediate effect of these proceedings, both upon the moral feeling and the internal peace of the country, was shocking. In London, and other great towns, the populace, let loose from the restraints to which they had heretofore submitted, ran into the wildest excesses. The marriage tie was everywhere disregarded. Hymns and psalms were sung in taverns to ribald tunes, and the name of God was blasphemed without scruple. In the country, multitudes, who had been accustomed to gather a willing alms at the convent-gate, found the last resource against destitution taken away from them, and became desperate: for, bad as these establishments were represented to be, and bad as, in many instances, they doubtless were, the event proved that they were not without their redeeming qualities. They had been the alms-houses,

where the aged dependant of more opulent families, the decrepit servant, the decayed artificer, retired as to a home, neither uncomfortable nor humiliating: they had been the county infirmaries and dispensaries, whence both poor and rich obtained medicine in their sickness, and a leech to dress their wounds: they had given an asylum to many an orphan child, frank entertainment to many a benighted traveller, and, though last not least, they had served as depositories for learning, in times when she could find elsewhere no resting-place for the sole of her foot. The indignation, therefore, of the people, and especially of the poor, when they beheld the revenues which had been freely shared among them grasped and retained by private persons, knew no bounds. Frequent insurrections took place, some of them exceedingly formidable, which the king was enabled to put down only by an admixture of force and duplicity, neither creditable to those immediately employed, nor beneficial as an example to future times.

Meanwhile the king, as if infected with the inconsistency of the age, poured out the vials of his wrath with indiscriminating fury, both upon Lutherans and Papists. The former he condemned to the flames as heretics, because they presumed to deny the truth of doctrines which he professed; the latter died upon the scaffold as traitors, because they refused to admit his supremacy. It forms a cruel blot in the memory of Sir Thomas More, once the zealous and able advocate of freedom of opinion, that he gave a ready aid to the persecution of the Lutherans, authorized their torture, and witnessed their death. But More himself was not destined to escape the rage of a master whom he had served with too much fidelity. Becoming alarmed at the king's innovations, he resigned the seals, which had been intrusted to him after Wolsey's disgrace, and retired into private life, where, among the circle of his

acquaintances, he spoke of passing events with a dangerous candour. He was, in consequence, required to take the new oath of allegiance, which, among other clauses, denounced the marriage with Catherine as null, and the princess Mary as a bastard; and refusing to give an opinion which could not, as he contended, bear upon the question at issue, an impeachment of high-treason was brought forward against him. He was condemned, and bore a long imprisonment with Christian meekness. He avowed his willingness to admit the legality of the settlement in the line which parliament had drawn, and desired nothing more than that he should not himself be compelled to decide a point on which the most learned universities had differed. But Henry was inexorable. Both More and Fisher, bishop of Rochester, perished,—the one, because he gave credit to the foolish ravings of the Holy Maid of Kent*; the other, because his conscience was too pure to permit so much as an equivocation, though the reward of equivocating ever so slightly would have been not less than life.

The atrocious acts, of which an account has just been given, might have been attributed, in the case of any other prince than Henry, to the advice of evil counsellors; those of which it remains for me to speak, could spring only from his own debased and vitiated temper. Anne Boleyn had been married three years, and had presented him with a daughter, named Elizabeth, when Catherine, her repudiated, but still faithful predecessor, died at Kimbolton. This circumstance, which she naturally regarded as confirm-

* Her name was Elizabeth Barton, who, becoming subject, through weakness, to trances and fits, believed herself, and was believed by others, to be inspired. Her denunciations were directed chiefly against the king, whom she threatened with the vengeance of Heaven, for repudiating Queen Catherine.

ing her influence over her husband, seemed to produce a directly contrary effect. He gradually withdrew from her society; and, though she was again in a condition which demanded at least sympathy and kindness, he treated her with so much harshness that her boy came dead into the world. Poor Anne was at no loss to discover the cause of this change: the unfeeling and capricious voluptuary had grown tired of the society of his wife, and transferred his worthless affections to Jane Seymour, the daughter of Sir John Seymour, under circumstances every way similar to those which had attended the growth of his attachment to herself. But Henry's principles,—if the term may be used in any sense, however restricted,—were not less perverted than his passions were violent. He either scrupled to deal lightly with the object of his attraction, or failed to do so, upon which he determined to make room for her both on his throne and in his bed, by removing her rival out of the way. Anne, as a favourer of the reformed opinions, had many and powerful enemies. Her manners, also, formed in the French school, appear to have been unusually free; but of moral guilt there is not the shadow of a proof that the stain attached to her. Nevertheless, she was committed to the Tower upon a double charge of adultery and incest; and, being convicted, chiefly on the evidence of Lady Rochford and several others, condemned to death. Her appeals for mercy, and the remonstrance of Cranmer, were alike disregarded. On the 18th of May she was beheaded; having survived her sentence only long enough to know, that a servile parliament had pronounced her marriage null, on the plea of a previous contract, and excluded her daughter Elizabeth from the line of succession.

Heedless alike of the opinion of the world, and of the dictates of common propriety and decorum, Henry hastened to complete his marriage with Jane Seymour.

and to pursue, with unabated ferocity, the career of innovation, in which, marked as it was with the blood of thousands, he had resolved to go forward. Shrines were everywhere plundered, and Papists and heretics equally condemned to die, while a sort of confession of faith was drawn up, and promulgated by parliamentary authority, to which the king's subjects were required everywhere to subscribe. This, called, from its severity, "The Bloody Statute," embodied, or was understood to embody, the king's sentiments in all matters both of faith and discipline, and was alike distasteful to the professors of the old system, and the genuine disciples of the new. As a necessary consequence, the faggot and the cord found ample occupation; indeed it is calculated, that not fewer than seventy thousand persons laid down their lives as martyrs, to what, on either side of the question, they believed to be the cause of God and of the truth.

Successful over all his domestic enemies, despotic both in the parliament and the convocation, on the best terms with the kings of France and Scotland, and too much feared to be molested by the emperor, Henry was made still more happy in the year 1537, by the birth (24th of October) of a son. Hitherto his ardent wishes for male-issue had been frustrated; his joy, therefore, on the present occasion, was scarcely dashed by the premature decease of the queen, twelve days after she became a mother. Henry marked his respect for her memory by elevating her brother, Sir Edward Seymour, to the dignity of earl of Hertford. He also created his infant son prince of Wales, duke of Cornwall, and earl of Chester. He then went on to draw more and more largely upon the forbearance of his allies, and the slavish devotion of his people. Reginald de la Pole, the grandson of the duke of Clarence, and of course not remotely connected with the royal family, had given great umbrage, by denouncing, from the

university of Paris, where he carried on his studies, the marriage with Anne Boleyn. Henry strove to inveigle him into his power, but failed; because both the Pope and the emperor perceived that they were bound to protect and provide for their champion. Seeing, therefore, that Reginald, now promoted to the rank of cardinal, set his authority at defiance, the king caused his brother Sir Geoffrey, the lord Montacute, the marquess of Exeter, and others of his friends, to be arrested, and put them to death; together with the aged countess of Salisbury, after obtaining against them a conviction of high-treason. He then called together his parliament, which, besides attainting the blood of the king's enemies, among whom were numbered several individuals of their house, surrendered into his hands, without any apparent reluctance, the last relic of liberty that remained to the nation. A bill was passed, which gave to royal proclamations the full force of law, and subjected to arbitrary penalties all who might refuse to obey them.

While these things were in progress, the king, whose devotion to the memory of Jane Seymour was not of long continuance, had set on foot more than one negotiation for a fourth marriage. He demanded of his ally, the king of France, the duchess-dowager of Longueville, the daughter of the duke of Guise, and a princess of the house of Lorraine; but Francis, who had already promised her to the king of Scots, declined to violate the engagement. Francis, on the other hand, proposed that Henry should wed Mary of Bourbon, daughter of the duke of Vendôme, or one of the duchess of Longueville's sisters; both of whom, he assured the amorous monarch, were nowise inferior to the duchess, either in beauty or size. Had he followed up the proposal by acquiescing in Henry's next demand, namely, that the ladies should be first of all submitted to his personal inspection, a union equally desired by

both parties would have probably been effected. But the gallantry of Francis took the alarm; and Henry, who understood not the meaning of the word, broke off at once, and turned his attention elsewhere. At last, after a widowhood of more than two years' duration, he was prevailed upon by Cromwell, now earl of Essex, to solicit the hand of Anne, the daughter of the duke of Cleves, a prince possessing great influence among the Protestant states of Germany, and connected by marriage with the elector of Saxony. The proffered alliance was accepted, and Henry, charmed with a picture by Holbein, which represented his bride as one of the most beautiful women of the age, waited with impatience her arrival in England.

The first glance which Henry obtained of his new wife,—and he went as far as Rochester to meet her,—sufficed to dissipate the illusion which he had been taught to encourage; and excited not only his disgust towards its innocent object, but his bitter hostility to Cromwell. Of the force of these sentiments he made no secret, withdrawing himself altogether from Anne's society; and if over the latter he threw a partial disguise, his was not the temper long to hinder its working. On the 12th of April, 1540, Cromwell met the parliament, surrounded with all the pomp, and apparently supported by all the influence, which had hitherto belonged to him; and on the 29th of June he was a prisoner in the Tower, and condemned, by a vote of the two houses, to suffer the pains of heresy and treason. All his professed friends, with the single exception of Cranmer, now forsook him; and his enemies, who were numerous both among Papists and Protestants, rejoiced in his fall. But the individual who displayed the most determined rancour, and contributed more than all the rest to bring the catastrophe about, was the duke of Norfolk. At the head of the Catholic party, that nobleman could not but view with abhor-

rence the chief actor in the suppression of the monasteries; while a suspicion, not ill-founded, that the ruin of Cromwell would open a door to the aggrandizement of his own family, failed not to sharpen his zeal in the prosecution of so laudable an object. Norfolk had seen, and for some time encouraged, the growing attachment of the king to his niece, Catherine Howard. He apprehended, however, that so long as Cromwell enjoyed the royal confidence, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to clear a way for her elevation; and hence, not less than from party motives, he exercised his ingenuity to accomplish the ruin of his rival.

Cromwell's behaviour, after his arrest, scarcely corresponded with the manliness of his character at other periods. He besought the king's pardon in language bordering upon abject, and acknowledged himself guilty of offences which there is no proof that he ever committed. But the mental quality for which he was mainly distinguished, was prudence; and he probably calculated on averting, by such means, the royal enmity from his son. Be that, however, as it may, he died regretted by few; being regarded as the cause, when in truth he was no more than the instrument, of all the cruelties and outrages which disfigured the period of his administration. Nor was Anne of Cleves long left in the enjoyment of the honours to which his influence had raised her. On the 24th of July, not many days after Cromwell's execution, a bill received the royal assent, which declared the king's recent marriage to be null, and settled upon the lady Anne a pension of 3000*l.* a year: the price, no doubt, of her acquiescence in so strange a piece of legislation.

Within a fortnight after the passing of this act, Henry gave his hand to Catherine Howard, with whose beauty and accomplishments he professed himself so much delighted, that he caused his confessor to join with him in a public thanksgiving. His happiness,

however, was of short duration. On the 10th of August the marriage took place; in the November following, he received such information of her dissolute life previous to that event, that he judged it necessary to institute a close and searching inquiry. The results of that inquiry proved fatal to the queen. Her guilt was established beyond dispute, and her innocence, even after marriage, was shown to be more than doubtful. Henry forthwith assembled his parliament, obtained bills of attainder against Catherine, Lady Rochford, and their accomplices, all of whom were beheaded on Tower-hill, the 22nd of January, 1542. But the wrath of the indignant monarch was not to be appeased even by this. His obsequious lords and commons pronounced it to be high-treason in any female, with whom the king might desire to contract a union, to conceal from him her irregularities, supposing her to have been guilty of such in her youth; and included under the same penalty, the parents or guardians of the frail fair one, who should wilfully screen the character of their child so circumstanced.

With this absurd and iniquitous law the people made merry, saying, That the king would surely select his next wife from among the widows of the land. This prophecy, though uttered in jest, was destined to receive, in due time, its accomplishment. On the 10th of July, 1545, he married Catherine Parr, the widow of lord Latimer, and a lady of mature age. As she was a discreet and prudent woman, Catherine accommodated herself to his humours; and contrived to secure, at least, his respect, to the last: but even Catherine was not without her trials. She was warmly attached to the doctrines of Luther, and even presumed to enter into theological controversy with her husband. This was to attack Henry on his weakest side; so the chancellor Wriothesley, and Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, were directed to make arrangements for com-

mitting her to prison. When intelligence of these proceedings reached her, the queen fell into hysterical fits, which lasted till the king, alarmed by her cries, caused himself to be conveyed into her apartment. "Kate," cried he, "you are a doctor." "No, sir," was the reply, "I only wished to divert you from your pain," (he was then suffering greatly from an ulcer in his thigh,) "by an argument, in which you so much shine." "Is it so, sweetheart?" exclaimed the king, "then we are friends again." By this stratagem she contrived to avert the storm, which she took good care not again to excite during the remainder of the king's life.

Eager as he was to establish his own supremacy at home, Henry was not wholly forgetful of the foreign relations of the country. He had long entertained the idea of uniting the whole island under one government; and had more than once hesitated between violence and a closer connexion with the royal family of Scotland as the readiest method of attaining that end. The memory of other times, however, finally prevailed, and he laboured, without effect, to bring about a marriage between James the Fifth and his daughter Mary. But the coldness with which these advances were met, and the refusal of James to grant him even an interview at York, roused his anger; and he resolved to accomplish, by force of arms, what forbearance and liberality had failed to bring about. Troops were accordingly enrolled, Scotland was invaded, and a war of skirmishes, alike unprofitable to both powers, ensued. The death of James, however, which occurred soon after the rout of Solway, an affair in which many Scottish nobles fell into Henry's hands, induced the king to try once more the effect of negotiation. James left behind him only one child, Mary, celebrated in after-times not more for her beauty than her misfortunes; and Henry proposed to wed her to his son Edward, the

undoubted heir of the English throne. There were many, among the Scottish nobles, who saw the advantages of this match, and earnestly endeavoured to promote it; but the policy of Cardinal Beaton, and of the party of which he was at the head, prevailed. Henry, unfortunately for his own purposes, had demanded the guardianship of the young queen's person, and that the government of the kingdom should be committed to his charge during her minority. The cardinal and his friends made ample use of the alarm which such a proposition was calculated to excite. The king's terms were rejected; and, after a fruitless offer to negotiate on a new basis, during the progress of which Henry made prize of several Scottish merchant-vessels, the ancient rivalry of the two nations reasserted its power. France lent her aid to her old ally, and a war was revived, which, if it cost the Scottish people their capital, placed an insuperable barrier in the way of the proposed union.

The part which Francis acted in this matter, and to which he mainly attributed the defeat of his favourite scheme, excited Henry's indignation, and confirmed him in the resolution which he had previously formed, of breaking with France, and once more uniting his arms with those of the emperor. Whatever differences had prevailed between him and Charles, the death of Queen Catherine threw into the shade; whereas Francis had given him many and recent causes of complaint, of which his interference in Scottish affairs sufficed to complete the sum. He affirmed that "his dear brother and ally," after engaging to follow his example, and to separate entirely from the See of Rome, had violated his pledge. He could not forgive the marriage of the Scottish king to the duchess of Longueville; he was indignant at certain jokes, in which Francis was represented to have indulged at the expense of his behaviour towards his queens; and he complained that the debts due to him

from France were not liquidated, nor his promised pension paid. All these motives operated to inflame the mind of the irascible monarch, and laid him open to the persuasives of the wily emperor. War was accordingly declared, and Henry himself, who still affected a passion for martial glory, passing the sea in a ship whose sails were made of cloth of gold, sat down, in July, 1544, before Boulogne. But neither the reduction of that town, nor the results of a few skirmishes at sea, compensated for the evil of so many and such expensive armaments; and, the emperor having concluded a separate treaty, in which no mention was made of Henry's wrongs, the latter became convinced, by degrees, that he could gain nothing by a continuance of hostilities. In June, 1546, the preliminaries of peace were signed; and, Scotland being included in the arrangement, Henry returned again, with fresh ardour, to the adjustment of the internal affairs of his own dominions.

First among these, in the estimation of the king, was the establishment of uniformity, as well in the principles as in the form of worship, in the church. With the view of effecting this, Henry caused two works to be published; one, which he termed the *Institution*, the other the *Erudition of a Christian Man*. To these he now added a second edition of the *Mass-Book*, from which were omitted the names of various saints, and into which was introduced a prayer for protection against the tyranny of the Pope, and from all his abominable enormities. He permitted the Bible also to be generally circulated in the vernacular tongue, and somewhat relaxed the severity of "the Bloody Statute;" but beyond this neither argument nor entreaty could draw him. On the contrary, as his bodily health became day-by-day more infirm, his ferocious zeal against heretics and schismatics burned with increased fury. Neither sex nor age, rank nor

learning, stood the unhappy recusant in stead; till the smoke of his victims ascended up to heaven, and "the land was defiled with blood." Meanwhile, the health of the monarch himself rapidly gave way. His body had grown so unwieldy, that he could not be moved without machines invented for the purpose. His breathing became so difficult, that he could not lie down; and to sign his name was a task too heavy for his feeble or overloaded hand. Stamps, with his initials, were affixed at his command, and in his presence, to such deeds as required the royal signature. He was offensive to the humblest of his attendants, in consequence of an ulcer in one of his swollen limbs, which often subjected him to the most excruciating torture.

Such was the miserable condition of the king, when a deed was perpetrated in his name, which, had he been guiltless of all other acts of cruelty and oppression, would have earned for him the condemnation of posterity. On the 12th of December, 1546, Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, one of the most accomplished poets and soldiers of his age, was, with his father, the duke of Norfolk, committed to the Tower. Of what precise offence either had been guilty, it would be hard to say, unless, indeed, the quartering of the royal arms with their own,—an honour to which they were by lineage entitled,—could be construed into such; but they were both of them objects of jealousy to Seymour, earl of Hertford, the brother of the late queen, and uncle to the prince of Wales. It has been conjectured, and not without reason, that Hertford wrought upon the suspicious mind of his master, by representing the Howards as ready to aspire to the throne, whenever it should become vacant. Be this, however, as it may, the arrest took place as has been stated, and Surrey, after a mock-trial, in which his sister was the principal witness, received sentence of death. He was beheaded on Tower-hill, on the 19th of January, 1547,—while

against his father a bill of attainder was found, by a parliament ever ready to anticipate the king's wishes, no matter how iniquitous or unworthy. An event, however, of greater moment to the realm, arrested his execution, after orders had been issued, and the block adjusted. At two o'clock in the morning of the 28th of January, Henry the Eighth expired, after a feeble effort to express, by a pressure of Cranmer's hand, that he put his trust in the Redeemer, and did not despair of pardon.

Of the character of this extraordinary prince, either as a monarch or a man, it is not my intention to offer any summary. All his actions prove him to have been pre-eminently selfish, and though the selfish man may occasionally perform a deed, which deserves in the abstract to be termed good, no portion of its merits can attach to him whose principles are utterly debased. The events of Henry's reign place him in a point of view widely different from that in which we can regard monarchs in general. He was clearly an instrument in the hand of a wise Providence, for the furtherance of its own ends; to the ultimate accomplishment of which his very vices were made subservient. Had he continued faithful to Catherine of Spain, it may be safely doubted whether England would, in his reign, have separated from the communion of the church of Rome. Had he proceeded in the work of spoliation with greater diffidence,—had he either plundered the church of less of her property, or abstained somewhat more from bestowing it when seized, upon the laity,—it seems extremely probable, that soon after the accession of Mary, all traces of the Reformation would have been lost. In like manner it was to the opposition of the Puritan lay-impropriators, even at a much later period, when the crown and the mitre lay alike in the dust, that the church of England was indebted for the preservation of all that remained of her property, and, perhaps, the

time is not even now very distant, when a similar interference may again stand her in stead. But it is not with reference to ecclesiastical affairs alone that Henry wrought much, though undesigned good, to the nation. The subserviency of his parliaments induced him to seek aid from them in all his seeming difficulties, and the facility with which they were ever found to accomplish objects hitherto regarded as impracticable, taught the people to regard such assemblies as all but omnipotent. Thus he, who swayed a sceptre more absolute by far than has ever yet been wielded by an European monarch, may be said to have laid the foundations of liberty for future generations; which, putting out of view the influence under which certain acts had been performed, attributed them entirely to the power of the men elected to represent the people, and to make laws in their name.

In this reign the full benefits of the English constitution were extended to Wales. Four new shires were added to it; many royal boroughs were erected, and the people were permitted to send to parliament a due proportion of knights, citizens, and burgesses. The same epoch is memorable for the foundation of the two greatest colleges in the kingdom—Christ Church in Oxford, and Trinity in Cambridge; as well as for the erection, by Wolsey, of a Greek professorship in the former university, and an attempt to improve the pronunciation of the Greek tongue. It appears, also, that the legal interest of money was fixed at ten per cent., that the rent of land varied from one shilling to fifteen pence per acre; that beef and pork were sold at a halfpenny per pound, mutton and veal at three farthings; that salads, carrots, turnips, and other edible roots, began to be used as food; and that hops were transplanted from Flanders, and brought, for the first time, into cultivation. With respect to commerce and manufactures, these seem to have been mainly confined,—the former to a

trade in cloth with the Low Countries, the latter to such articles as the ingenuity of a few Flemish emigrants could produce. Yet was the nation, amid all this seeming feebleness, beginning to feel its powers. It will be seen, as we proceed, to what uses these powers were turned.



Great Seal of Henry the Eighth.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND, AND THE CAUSES
WHICH LED TO IT.

IN the preceding chapter some account has been given of the mode in which the Reformation in England was begun,—that great religious change, in comparison with which, all the other changes which the historian is called upon to describe, sink, in point of importance, into nothing. While tracing down the progress of events as they befel, it was impossible to enter with any minuteness into a consideration of the causes that produced them. Still I cannot but feel that entirely to omit such an inquiry, would leave a work like the present very incomplete; and I am, therefore, anxious to supply, as far as may be done in a few supplementary pages, what the reader would otherwise be justified in considering as a grievous defect in my plan.

There can be no greater mistake than to suppose that the Reformation came upon the people of England by surprise. For centuries prior to the accession of Henry the Eighth, things had been tending to such a consummation. It is true that the elements of change worked all this while underground, inasmuch as the Romish church was still able, amid a great deal of secret discontent, to preserve the appearance of unity within herself. But not the less steady was the progress which these elements were making, nor the less sure the results in which they were to terminate. The wood was thoroughly dry long before the torch was applied, and hence, when once ignited, it burned with irresistible violence.

It is scarcely asserting too much to say, that from the date of St. Augustin's arrival in this country, the seeds of a revolution, which was not effected till more than

seven centuries had run their course, were sown. The religion which Augustin planted was not, indeed, encumbered with all the gross and hideous fables which his successors impressed upon it. Somewhat too much, perhaps, both he and pope Gregory were inclined to yield, for the sake of gaining over the multitude; but the superstitious observances at which they connived, if they did not positively sanction them, were, when contrasted with the practices of a later age, harmless in the extreme. Of this we require no further proof than is afforded in the letter of instruction which Gregory addressed to the apostle of England, after he had begun to bring over converts in large numbers. "As the people," says the writer, "have been used to slaughter oxen in their sacrifices to devils, some feasts on this account must be substituted for them. Thus, in the days of the new dedications (of churches), or on the nativity of the martyrs, whose bones are there deposited, they may build themselves huts, of the boughs of trees, round the churches, and celebrating the assembly with religious feasting, no more offer beasts to the devil, but kill them to the praise of God in their eating, and return thanks to the Giver of all things. While some pleasures are outwardly permitted them, they will more easily consent to inward joys; for there is no doubt it is impossible to retrench all at once from obdurate hearts." Such a tampering, as this with the ancient superstitions of the Anglo-Saxons may, perhaps, admit of some excuse; and I do not find that Gregory, who was no pope in the modern sense of that term, ever desired to go further.

I pass by the controversies which arose between Augustin and the British bishops, respecting tonsure, the form of administering the rite of baptism, and the exact period at which the festival of Easter ought to be observed. These differences served, indeed, for a while, to keep the churches of Wales and of England

dismal regions, purgatory: the offerings to the manes, masses for the dead. In a word, all those errors in faith and practice, against which the Reformers of the sixteenth century protested, including image-worship, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the communion in one kind only, were already encouraged,—though they were not formally authorised by any decrees of council till periods considerably later.

In exact proportion as the Anglo-Saxon Church became more abject in her submission to the see of Rome, her creed and her observances became more and more infected with the errors which it was the policy of Rome to countenance. We learn, for example, from Bede, that in his day the Virgin was invoked; that images were used in the churches; that the doctrine of purgatory, with its necessary attendants, penances and confession, were received. Still there was one powerful antidote to the spread of corruption, from which the Anglo-Saxon Church appears never to have been entirely cut off: the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were not refused to the people, among whom, on the contrary, translations in the vernacular tongue were freely circulated. But even these were in the end so little read, that they ceased to have much effect upon men's manners. From day to day the priests became more aspiring, the people more blind in their submission, till events occurred, which, while they appeared to consolidate the power of the hierarchy at the moment, laid, in fact, the foundation of that blessed state of things, which, under God, we owe to the labours and the sufferings of the Reformers.

This is not the place in which it would be convenient to point out either the causes which led to the institution of the several monastic orders, or the progress of the bodies themselves from excessive poverty to enormous wealth. Enough is done when I state, that the Pope, finding the regulars (as monks of the

different orders came by-and-by to be called,) by far the most convenient tools wherewith to work out his own purposes, gave to them in all lands a degree of confidence and support, such as he did not afford to the secular clergy. For the secular clergy, especially in England, were by no means willing to submit their own judgments in all matters of discipline to those of the bishop of Rome. Living in the midst of their own families, and connected by ties of marriage and consanguinity with their neighbours, they ceased not to be citizens when they entered into holy orders; and though they had doubtless become, in many instances, both slothful and ignorant, they were still attached to their flocks, and jealous of their Church's liberties. It was an act of policy on the part of the Pope, to set up, in opposition to a clergy so circumstanced, bands of regulars, who, having no interests different from his own, and leaning constantly upon him for support, might make the extension of his power the main object of their lives. By the indefatigable exertions of St. Dunstan, of which some notice was taken in the course of this history, he succeeded. Then came a decree which enjoined celibacy on the clergy, as well regular as secular, and which, being supported by the one class, and violently resisted by the other, served to widen the breach that already held them apart. And now followed scenes of wrangling and mutual hatred, of which it would little edify the serious reader were I to give him a description. The monks railed against the seculars, as worldly, sensual, and ostentatious; the seculars accused the monks of hypocrisy and presumption: but the combatants were by no means fairly matched. With the vices of the seculars the people were already acquainted; of their opponents they knew no more, than that they affected great zeal for the propagation of religious truth, and practised extreme mortification and self-denial. From day to day, there-

fore, the regulars acquired an ascendancy over the public mind, which they employed not more to aggrandise themselves than to depress their rivals.

The contest between the regular and secular clergy was of long continuance, and its progress was distinguished throughout by the unsparing use of reproach and ridicule on both sides. This was not without its effect on the minds of the laity, whose respect for the priesthood at large became in due time shaken, in consequence of the total absence of decorum which marked the bearing of the several orders one towards another. It is true, that for a while no such effects were apparent, and that the monks seemed to carry all before them. Possessing, perhaps engrossing the whole learning and science of the dark ages, they were very little scrupulous touching the uses to which these might be turned, so long as they succeeded, by fair means or by foul, in working upon the superstitious fears of the people. Accordingly, fables the most monstrous were everywhere circulated as truths; pretended miracles were performed at the shrines of martyrs and saints; the power of delivering departed spirits from the fires of purgatory was openly claimed; and, above all, it was shown that to have his bones laid in a convent of Franciscan or Dominican friars, was a sure means by which the robber baron would secure for himself an admission into the kingdom of heaven. Such a man would not of course hesitate, when at the point of death, to purchase so great a privilege, by making over to the convent a portion of his lands. Thus were societies, founded in poverty, accustomed to draw towards themselves a continual accession of wealth, till they became, ere long, luxurious, slothful, in many instances vicious, and in almost all, distasteful to the court and to the people.

In expressing myself thus, I am very far from desiring it to be understood, that there were not,

among the religious bodies of England, even during the most corrupt times, bright specimens of Christian piety and Christian virtue. Such there doubtless were; but then it was a sort of piety of which the example was not permitted to go abroad, and a virtue which savoured, in most cases, too much of ostentation. The door of the convent, for example, was never closed against the supplications of the poor and needy—indeed, multitudes of men and women lived in idleness, on the bounty which the monks distributed. But the fact, that the monks were able thus to maintain out of their surplus funds a large portion of the community, told against men whose professed object in seeking the retirement of the cloister, was, that they might prepare themselves for heaven by humility, and self-denial, and fasting, and prayer. Nor was this all. Among other possessions, the monastic bodies contrived, by degrees, to make themselves masters of a prodigious number of advowsons in all parts of the kingdom. Wherever this happened, the monks took care to transfer to the monastery the great tithes of the parish, while to their *vicarius*, or vicar, was granted either the small tithes, of which the value was not unfrequently fixed according to what was called a *modus decimandi*, or else some trifling money payment, quite inadequate to afford him a decent maintenance. The consequence was, that the bishops were compelled to look for incumbents to such benefices from among the meanest and most illiterate of the people. Men so ignorant as to be in many instances unable to read, far less to understand, the Latin prayers, were accordingly admitted into holy orders; and religion itself became scandalized, not more by the vulgarity than by the vices of its teachers.

So long as the secular clergy were in any condition to maintain themselves against the encroachments of the regulars, the conduct of the latter, though very far from pure, was at least decent. They did not venture

to shock the public mind by a too great display of avarice, and they were zealous and active in preaching—a duty which the seculars grievously neglected. When their rivals submitted, however, and all power became in some measure centred in themselves, their bearing underwent a change. Indolence gained ground upon them. They no longer taught the people like men who were in earnest, or if they did, it was after a fashion of which the people soon began to grow weary. There arose, among the different orders, an excessive jealousy of pre-eminence; so much so, indeed, that the Franciscan became an object of fierce vituperation to the Carmelite, the Carmelite to the Dominican, the Dominican to the Augustin, and he to all the rest. The kingdom was, in fact, divided against itself,—while there sprang up from day to day new sects or orders, who railed, not without cause, against the luxury of the great houses, and the shocking immorality of their inmates. All this presented to the eyes of the people a spectacle which was certainly not calculated to increase their reverence for the priesthood, while it moved from time to time some better spirit among the clergy themselves, to desire a thorough reformation.

In the course of this history, mention has been made of the frequent contests which happened between the kings of England and the Pope, relative to the degree of authority which the latter claimed to exercise within the English realm. That question appears to have been settled in the reign of Henry the Second; for the murder of Becket gave to the Pontiff advantages of which he was too ambitious not to avail himself. But in this, as in other instances, a victory which seemed to ensure the perpetual triumph of the see of Rome, proved, in its results, fatal to Popish tyranny. The chord was stretched to a degree of tension which rendered it incapable of resistance when assailed; in

other words, the king and the people of England were disgusted, and felt the thralldom to which they were subjected, as a yoke very grievous to be borne. Though, therefore, the sovereign, in his official capacity, maintained the Church as by law established, and secured to her ministers the undisturbed possession of their rights, both he and his nobles enjoyed in secret the attacks which began on all hands to be made upon the corruptions of the clergy. Hence the countenance which Chaucer, himself a courtier, received, while overwhelming with ridicule the monks of his day, and hence too, the facilities afforded to a still more important instrument in God's hands, of whom, and of whose labours, it now remains to speak.

John Wickliffe, of whom something was said in a previous chapter, was born in the year 1324, in the parish of Wycliffe, from which, indeed, his name was derived, nor far from Richmond, and the river Tees, in Yorkshire. He was one of those remarkable men whom Providence from time to time raises up for the advancement of its own gracious purposes, and the benefit of its creatures;—a man of ardent temper, incorruptible integrity, of great learning, of prodigious industry, and except on one, and that a melancholy occasion, of indomitable courage and resolution. Devoted to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and well read in the Fathers of the Latin church, he began, while yet a probationer at Merton College, in Oxford, to discover ground of dissatisfaction, as well with the moral conduct as with the doctrines of the clergy. At first, indeed, his controversy lay with the hordes of mendicant friars, who, inundating the University, perverted the minds of the students, and led them into the commission of all sorts of extravagances. But the habit of inquiry grew so strong with him, that he began, ere long, to seek a nobler purpose, and to protest publicly, both in his lectures and in written treatises,

against the corruptions of the church to which he belonged. It exhibits no proof of the unanimity which has sometimes been said to have prevailed in Christendom, previous to the Reformation, that Wickliffe's sentiments were well received, and very generally commended. He was promoted, indeed, while thus inveighing against the errors of his brethren, first to be master of Balliol College, then to the living of Fellingham, in Lincolnshire, and by-and-by to the wardenship of Canterbury College, of which archbishop de Islip was the founder and patron.

Wickliffe's temper was naturally impetuous, and as he grew warm in his pious work, his zeal considerably outran his judgment. In some points, the principles which he taught were worthy of all acceptance; as, for example, that the doctrine of transubstantiation was to be rejected; that the bishop of Rome had no authority over other churches; that the Gospel is alone, and of itself, a sufficient rule of faith and practice; that pilgrimages and indulgences are vain things, the worship of saints unauthorized, forced vows of celibacy unlawful, and above all, that justification comes by faith in Christ, and is not the merited reward of man's good actions. Unfortunately, however, he was not content to stop here. He contended, in his abhorrence of sacerdotal vices, that the wickedness of the priest vitiates the acts of his ministry; and argued stoutly for the lawfulness of a resumption by the patron, or the king, of endowments settled on the church in perpetuity. That he, himself, ever went beyond this, we have no decided evidence; yet it is certain, that his immediate disciples, of whom lord Cobham was one, enrolled themselves into a sort of inquisitorial court, in every particular, while sitting in judgment on the morals of the superior clergy, denied them to be priests of God, whether archbishops or bishops, as often as their conduct did not correspond

with the standard of perfection which their judges had set up. Nay, nor did their presumption end here. The Lollards (so Wickliffe's followers came to be styled,) asserted their right to preach in church-yards, and at fairs and markets, without any licence from the bishop of the diocese; and while they railed at pontifical habits, and denounced church-music, and especially that of the organ, they adopted a phraseology peculiar to themselves, and not unlike that to which the Puritans of a later age were addicted. This was, indeed, to mingle large portions of error with the truth. Yet it cannot be denied that Wickliffe was himself a mighty instrument in God's hands, and that in nothing he proved more useful than in the translation of portions of the Holy Scriptures, which, though forbidden to be circulated, and called in by public authority, were, by the people, eagerly perused, and carefully preserved. Under the floors of their chambers, or in the roofs of their cottages, the pious rustics concealed their treasure, and found solace from the study of its contents, when the closing in of night set them free from the dread of a domiciliary visit.

Wickliffe passed away, but the good seed which he had sown by no means perished with him. His followers, likewise, sustained much persecution, yet never, from the date of his first protest, down to the appearance of Cranmer on the stage, was England without its multitudes of Gospel Christians. These were, of course, ready to embrace, in spirit and in truth, the principles which our great Reformers advocated; while there were numbers besides whom motives far less worthy induced to profess a similarity of opinion. For to Wickliffe's New Testament, succeeded that of Tindal, of which, by means of the newly-invented art of printing, copies were multiplied indefinitely; and in which the laity found no warrant for the mummeries and extravagances which the Church of Rome had so long

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passed upon them as religious rites. It was to no purpose that proclamations were issued, prohibiting the circulation of heretical treatises. Men who had read their Bibles, perused with eagerness the tracts which soon began to make way among them, and of which it was the purpose to contrast the Church as she was, with what she had been in the days of Christ and his Apostles. Thus, on all sides, was the mighty fabric of Popish error assailed; and the very cruelty with which it was sought to extirpate or overawe the assailants, served but to hasten its downfall.

Such are a few of the secondary causes to which the Reformation may fairly be attributed. As to the primary cause,—that is to be looked for in the will of Him alone, who, though in times past he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, stood forth, when the fitting season came, to vindicate his own truth. And great, and highly to be prized are the benefits which the Reformation has conferred upon the people of England. Divided the Reformed Church may be,—split up, unfortunately, into sects and parties, out of which have sprung too much of bitterness, and controversy, and mutual ill-will; but at least, the minds of men have been delivered from a state of the most pitiable bondage, while the Scriptures are laid open, out of which all may choose for themselves a rule of life. Neither is it fair or candid, in reference to the schisms which walked hand-in-hand with the Reformation, to allege that they are the offspring of the Reformation. I have already shown, that, under the disguise of universal conformity, the Church of Rome was just as much broken up into factions as is the Church of the Bible; while, in matters of doctrine, the Calvinist differs not more widely from the Arminian, than the Thomist differed from the Scotist. And when we look further,—when we compare the moral training of the Protestant with that of the Papist, how striking is the contrast! The

Papist sinned; he went to his priest,—he made confession; and, being enjoined to pay a certain sum of money to the convent, and, perhaps, to perform some unmeaning act of penance, he was absolved. The Protestant sins, and his priest tells him, that he must seek for pardon from his Maker,—who, for Christ's sake, has promised to forgive all such as are sincere and hearty in their repentance.

Were there no other ground of boasting than this, well might the people of England be proud, that of their race and lineage, there came such men as Wickliffe, Tindal, Cranmer, Ridley, and Hooper. But the benefits conferred upon them by these instruments in God's hands extend much further. A pure and simple form of worship has been compiled for them. Their churches are now schools of public instruction, within which the poor and the rich have the same Gospel preached to them. Their clergy are admitted, even by their enemies, to be pious, zealous, learned, and sincere in the work of their calling. Literature has flourished; a spirit of freedom in civil affairs has been encouraged; and the success which has ever since attended the national efforts to become great and prosperous, abundantly testifies that the nation has been favoured of Heaven. But I cannot better close this imperfect sketch than in the words of a writer, whose little work, as it lies within the reach of all men, so it cannot be too generally known or too widely circulated.

"To the Reformation," says Mr. Blunt, "we owe it, that a knowledge of religion has kept pace in the country with other knowledge; and that in the general advance of science, and the general appetite for inquiry, this paramount principle of all has been placed in a position to require nothing but a fair field and no favour, in order to assert its just pretensions. We are here embarrassed by no dogmas of corrupt and unenlightened times still riveted upon our reluctant

acceptance, by an idea of papal or synodical infallibility; but stand, with the Bible in our hands, prepared to abide by the doctrines we can discover in it, because furnished with evidences for its truth (thanks to the Reformation for this also), which appeal to the understanding, and to the understanding only; so that no man competently acquainted with them, need shrink from the encounter of the infidel, or feel for a moment, that his faith is put to shame by his philosophy. Infidelity there may be in the country,—for there will ever be men who will not trouble themselves to examine the grounds of their religion, and men who will not dare to do it; but how far more intense would it have been, and more dangerous, had the spirit of the times been, in other respects, what it is, and the Reformation yet to come; religion yet to be exonerated of weights that sunk it heretofore in this country, and still sinks it in countries around us; inquiry to be resisted in an age of curiosity; opinions to be bolstered up (for they may not be retracted), in an age of incredulity; and pageants to be addressed to the senses, instead of arguments to the reason, in an age which, at least, calls itself profound? As it is, we have nothing to conceal—nothing to evade—nothing to impose; the reasonableness, as well as righteousness of our reformed faith, recommends it; and whatever may be the shocks it may have to sustain, from scoffs, and doubts, and clamour, and licentiousness, and seditious tongues, and an abused press, it will itself, we doubt not, prevail against them all, and save, too, as we trust, the nation which has cherished it, from the terrible evils, both moral, social, and political, that come of a *heart* of unbelief*.”

* *The Reformation in England*, by the Rev. J. J. BLUNT, Page 325.

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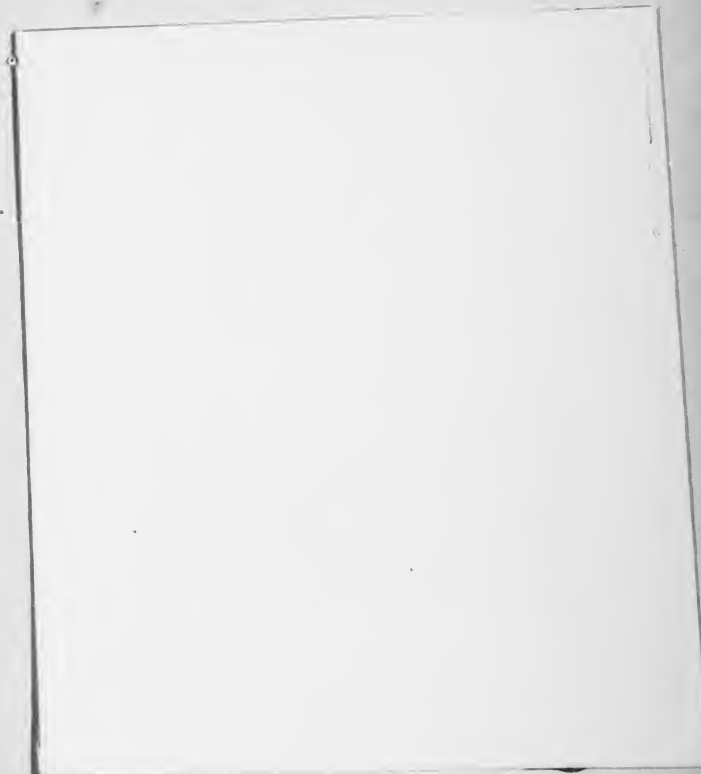
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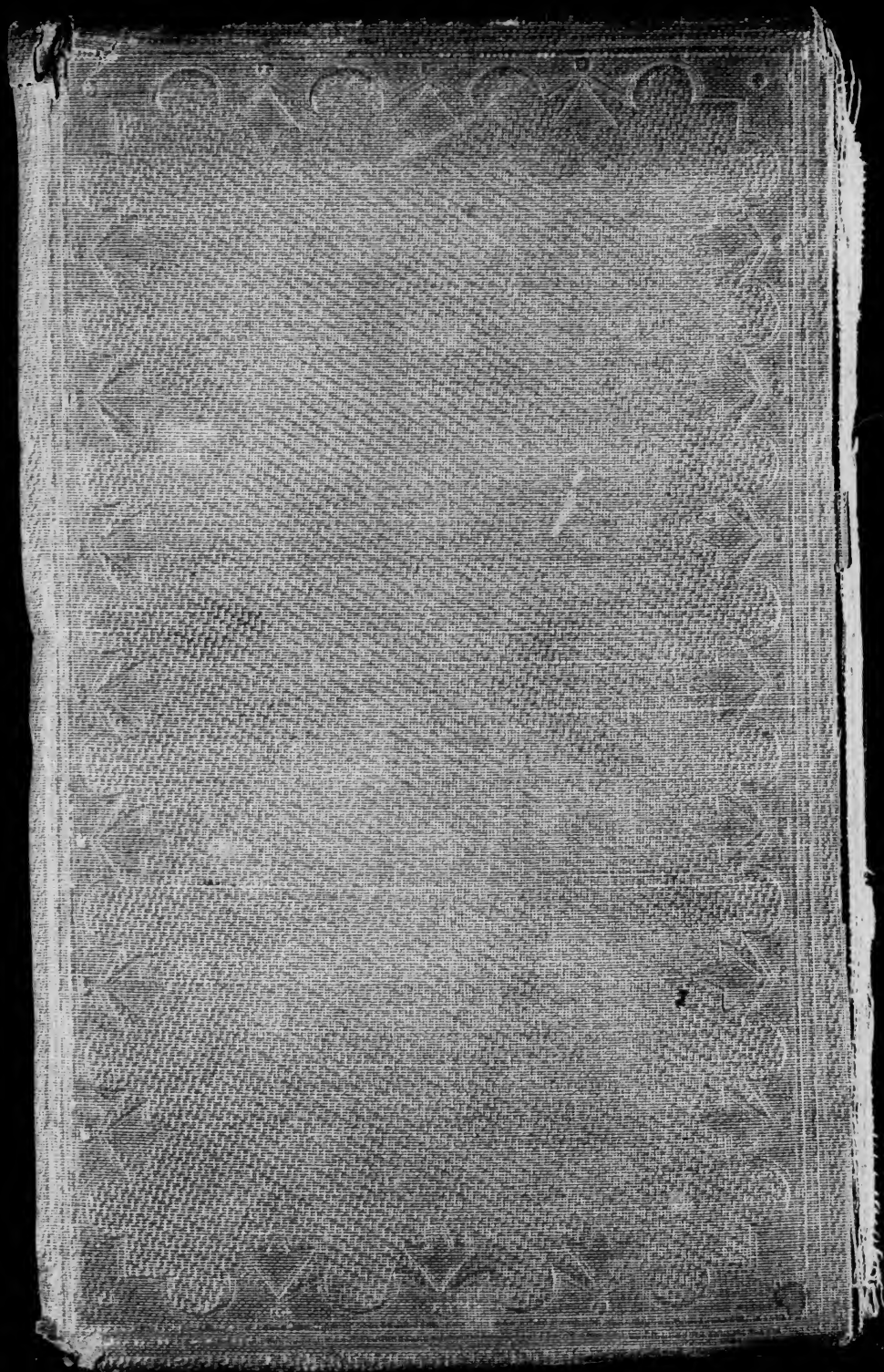
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[A. D. 1547 to A. D. 1558.]

THREE years prior to the death of Henry the Eighth, a bill had been carried through parliament, which, in some degree, restored to the princesses Mary and Elizabeth the rights of which previous enactments had deprived them. Nothing, indeed, was done to remove from their descent the stain of bastardy; but the legislature, without noticing that circumstance, or seeking to reconcile their jarring and, in many respects, inconsistent claims, pronounced them alike capable, under certain conditions, of succeeding to the throne. These conditions implied, first, the demise of the king without male issue; and, secondly, the submission of the princesses to such terms as his majesty might consider it expedient to specify. Had the act in question gone no further than this, it would have afforded a fair illustration of the temper of the parliaments which, under the first princes of the line of Tudor, gave laws

to England; but it did not stop here. Besides authorizing the king to nominate a regency, and to appoint to every great office of state during the minority of his son, it empowered him, in the event of the prince's death, or of the death or forfeiture of the princesses, to dispose of the realm as of a private estate, by letters-patent, or a testamentary deed. Thus were the arbitrary humours of this arbitrary monarch flattered even to the last, while the delusive idea was created in his mind, that he should still continue to govern after the grave had closed over him.

Henry the Eighth died, as has been related, in the night between the 27th and 28th of January, 1547. For the space of three days no formal notice was taken of the event; but at the end of that period a will was produced, which, among other arrangements, fixed the majority of the prince at the age of eighteen, and committed, in the interval, the guidance of public affairs to sixteen executors, assisted by twelve counsellors. Of the noblemen and gentlemen composing these bodies, by far the larger proportion were avowed adherents to the principles of the Reformation. Their first proceedings, moreover, gave proof that they were not disposed to halt between two opinions, or to hamper themselves by any servile adherence to the wishes of one whom they had no further cause to fear. After proclaiming Edward the Sixth, then in his tenth year, and removing him from the residence of the Princess Elizabeth at Enfield to London, the executors held a meeting in the Tower; when it was agreed, with one dissentient voice, that of Wriothesley the chancellor, that the constitution of the regency required revision. Lord Hertford, created soon afterwards duke of Somerset, was in consequence declared Protector, with powers which obtained, from day to day, increased latitude. Other changes followed, including the promotion of various members of the council, and the compulsory resig-

nation of the chancellor, now earl of Southampton, till on the 12th of March, a patent was obtained from the young king, which produced a total revolution in the government. By that deed Somerset was intrusted with all, or more than all, the prerogatives of royalty. He was authorized to name his own privy-council; to consult with such members only as he might select; and to execute whatever he or they deemed for the public service, "without incurring any penalty or forfeiture from any law, statute, proclamation, or ordinance, whatsoever."

The uses to which the Protector applied his somewhat unconstitutional powers, were, first to have the king crowned with all solemnity at Westminster, and then to carry forward vigorously, but for the most part with remarkable moderation, the great work of reform in the church. All prosecutions under the Six Acts of the late reign ceased; prisoners were set at liberty, and exiles recalled. Visitors were despatched throughout the kingdom, with scarcely bounded authority, to inquire into and correct such abuses as might prevail. They were instructed to require, that at least four sermons in the year should be delivered from every parochial pulpit against the Pope's supremacy; that the worship of saints should be discontinued; and all images, abused by superstitious offerings, or observances, destroyed. To assist a clergy, hitherto unaccustomed to preach, and perhaps too ignorant, in many instances, to instruct others, a book of Homilies was drawn up; while an English translation of the Bible, and a copy of Erasmus's Commentary on the Gospels, were commanded to be placed in every church for the use of the people. So far the Protector went by the advice of Archbishop Cranmer, under the authority of a prerogative, to which it would have been difficult to assign limits; nor did he hesitate, on the same grounds, to commit to the Fleet Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and to remove

Tunstal, bishop of Durham, from the privy-council. But his next steps were taken more regularly, and, as a necessary consequence, with still more of effect.

On the 4th of November, 1547, a parliament assembled, in which several bills were passed to promote and enlarge the Reformation. It was pronounced lawful for all persons to possess and read the Holy Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. The laity, equally with the clergy, were declared entitled to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in both kinds. The clergy were permitted to marry. Bishops were henceforth to be appointed by letters-patent under the great seal; and process in the ecclesiastical courts was to run in the king's name alone. In like manner, the statutes which subjected Lollards to punishment were repealed; nor was a shred of Henry's penal code left, with the exception of his acts against the Pope's supremacy. All these proceedings, together with the repeal of the statute which gave to the king's proclamation the force of law, were highly satisfactory to the primate; but there were other acts of the reforming parliament which pleased him less. From amid the wreck of the confiscations to which Henry had lent himself, there still remained in different parts of England a considerable number of chantries and free-chapels, more or less liberally endowed. These, in spite of Cranmer's remonstrances, were, like the abbeys, condemned to dissolution, and their lands and revenues being seized by the crown, were divided among certain recently created nobles.

Mortified, but not disheartened, by a display of so much selfishness, the primate continued to labour without ceasing in the holy cause to which he had devoted both life and character. Various works were compiled under his superintendence, and put into circulation, such as a catechism, which has long fallen into disuse; a form for the administration of the Lord's

Supper; and a liturgy, or book of Common Prayer. These were followed shortly afterwards by a set of forty-two articles, which were supposed to speak with authority the opinions of the church; and were designed to secure, as far as it is possible so to do, unanimity of sentiment among its members. It is scarcely necessary to add, that both the liturgy and the articles underwent, at a later period, sundry alterations; but that the substance of both is to be found in the services still used in all the parochial churches of England and Ireland.

In forwarding this great work, Cranmer met with considerable opposition; more especially from Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, from Bonner, bishop of London, from Tunstal, bishop of Durham, as well as from the bishops of Chichester, Worcester, and Exeter. The three latter were, in the end, deprived of their sees, as was Bonner, in spite of a respite which his feigned compliance with the humour of the times had obtained for him; while Gardiner underwent a persecution, mild, indeed, in comparison with that which the papists, under similar circumstances, would have inflicted; but discreditable, because contradictory to that freedom of opinion on which the principles of the Reformation were assumed to rest. It was not, however, against the popish party alone that the reigning parliament found it necessary to enact laws. During the confusion of the late reign numberless fanatics had arisen, who, under the pretext of worshipping God in spirit and in truth, set all the decencies of civilized society at defiance. There were Predestinarians, who indulged in the grossest sins, yet contended, that by being of the elect their salvation was sure; there were Antinomians, who contended for a community of goods; Fifth-monarchy men, who professed allegiance to Christ as their only sovereign; Arians, Unitarians, Davidians, and Libertines; the forerunners of that desperate band, before whom, within the space of little more than a century, both the

church and the monarchy ceased to stand upright. To meet the cases of these enthusiasts, an Act of Uniformity was passed, which required all persons to attend public worship, under pain of ecclesiastical censures, and of six months' imprisonment, for the first offence; twelve for the second; and for the third, imprisonment for life. In like manner it was found necessary, some time afterwards, to strengthen the hands of the executive, by passing a Riot Act of great severity; while to call the king, or any of his successors, a heretic, a tyrant, an infidel, or a usurper, was pronounced punishable by forfeiture and imprisonment; and on a repetition of the offence, with the pains of high-treason.

Important as these transactions were, and lively as was the interest with which he regarded them, the Protector still found leisure to pursue the line of policy which had been left to him as a legacy by his master; and attempts continued to be made to bring about a union between Scotland and England, by the marriage of their youthful sovereigns. The Scots, however, had neither forgotten, nor forgiven, the rude manner of Henry's courtship; and so long as cardinal Beaton's party continued in power, the negotiation made no progress. But the murder of that prelate, in March, 1546, and the zeal with which the cause of the assassins was espoused by Knox, and other leaders of the Reformation, created new hopes in the court of London. The assassins had thrown themselves into the castle of St. Andrew's, where they maintained themselves with undaunted resolution. Nor had Henry scrupled to send a squadron to their aid, in defiance of the treaty by which he was bound to suspend hostilities in that quarter. Henry's death made no alteration in the views of the English cabinet. On the 9th of March, 1547, the Protector concluded two treaties with the murderers; by the first of which they engaged to promote the marriage of their sovereign

with Edward the Sixth, while by the second they undertook to assist an English army in securing possession of the young queen's person, as well as of the principal fortresses in the kingdom. But by an act of treachery on the part of one of their own body, the latter of these projects was discovered to Arran, and the regent hastened to reduce St. Andrew's, ere Somerset was in a condition to succour it.

St. Andrew's fell on the 30th of July. On the 2d of September, Somerset, carrying with him, as his second in command, Dudley, earl of Warwick, crossed the Tweed at the head of twenty thousand men. A fierce encounter took place at Pinkie, which ended in the defeat of the Scots; and the Protector pushed on to Leith, which he seized and plundered. But he had retained his conquest barely four days, when, to the surprise of the troops, an order of retreat was issued; and the English were again beyond the Tweed, within the space of little more than a fortnight from the time when the inroad began. Various surmises were hazarded as to the cause of this movement, which was occasioned by events known only to the Protector himself, and in the progress of which the continuance or dissolution of his own power was immediately involved. The Protector had a brother, Sir Edward Seymour, to whom the late king had awarded a place in the council of twelve, but whose ambition was not to be gratified by any station inferior to the highest. Though raised by Somerset's influence to the peerage, and vested with the authority and the emoluments of lord-high-admiral, this restless man scrupled not to engage in a plot for the removal of his brother from the Protectorate. His first step was to wed, with indecent haste, Catherine Parr, the widow of Henry; his second, on the demise of his wife, to seek an alliance with the Princess Elizabeth. Somerset received intelligence of these proceedings while in Scotland, as well as of the arts which

his brother employed to alienate from him the confidence of his royal nephew. He hurried back to London, caused the traitor to be thrown into the Tower, brought in a bill of attainder against him, and signed the warrant for his execution. On the 20th of March, 1548, this intriguing and wayward man paid the penalty of his evil intentions with his blood.

Most of these occurrences befell during the first year of Edward's reign; the second was marked by events much more unsatisfactory. In Scotland, the war languished, in spite of many partial victories; till the removal of Mary to France, and her betrothal to the dauphin, placed the object for which it had been undertaken beyond the reach of accomplishment. At home, too, discontents began to prevail, which led to revolts in many quarters. A variety of causes contributed to produce these. Not to lay too much stress on a depreciation of the currency by the late king, an increasing demand for wool by the manufacturers of the continent had caused the landowners to convert into grazing-farms an undue proportion of their estates, which necessarily threw out of employment multitudes of husbandmen, and occasioned great and general distress throughout the country. There were no convents left, from the bounty of which these wretched men could seek support; but there were multitudes of houseless monks abroad, ready and willing to inflame into madness the passions of a starving, and therefore a highly inflammable population. Wilts, Sussex, Surrey, Hants, Berks, Kent, Gloucester, Somerset, Suffolk, Warwick, Essex, Hertford, Leicester, Worcester, and Rutland, were all in a state of combustion at the same time. The exertions of the resident gentlemen, supported here and there by the king's troops, sufficed to restore order in most instances; and in Devonshire, where for a time appearances seemed to be alarming, the rebels were put down without much

difficulty. But in Norfolk, where one Ket, a tanner, put himself at the head of twenty thousand men, more gigantic efforts were needed. It was found necessary to recall from Scotland the earl of Warwick, with the flower of his foreign mercenaries; and even these did not succeed in crushing the sedition, till Ket and his followers, weakened by famine, consented to lay down their arms on capitulation.

Of these agricultural riots,—for, with the exception of Ket's rebellion, they deserve no other appellation,—the Protector was himself an active, though an involuntary promoter. He had issued a proclamation against the enclosure of commons, which on the fall of the monasteries began to be largely effected; and the people, mistaking the object of the prohibition, attacked in all quarters the parks of the aristocracy. For this Somerset was never forgiven. He was accused of courting popularity by unworthy means; and as his manner, even towards his colleagues in office, had become, of late, reserved and supercilious, almost all lent themselves with avidity to the views of his enemies. Warwick, an aspiring and an able man, placed himself at the head of the cabal. He pushed his operations with equal perseverance and address, thwarted the Protector's policy with reference to the French war, gained possession of the Tower, with the military stores deposited there; and at last assumed an attitude of hostility, of which it was impossible to mistake the meaning. Somerset collected a handful of troops, and wrote pressing letters to his colleagues, that they would come with their retainers to the king's defence; but met everywhere with a cold reception. He bent beneath the storm; and being deprived of his office, and thrown into prison, was glad to purchase a release, by the forfeiture of the whole of his personal goods, and the payment of an annual ransom from his landed estates of two thousand pounds.

Even this, however, proved to be nothing more than a respite from the fate which awaited him. After resuming his seat in the council, and giving his daughter in marriage to the eldest son of his rival, he was accused of conspiring to accomplish a revolution in the government; and being convicted of felony, by a process of which the legality seems to be more than doubtful, he was beheaded, on the 22nd of January, 1552, upon Tower-hill.

The disgrace of Somerset opened for Warwick a way to the protectorate, and caused the popish party, who had been mainly instrumental in effecting the change, to anticipate the recovery of their influence; but they had deceived themselves. The young king, however pliable on other points, was firm in his attachment to the Protestant religion, and the Reformation went forward under the new administration with as much vigour as under the old. It was now, indeed, that Gardiner, and his brethren of the Roman Catholic faith, suffered the penalties, of which I have elsewhere made mention. Strenuous exertions were used, moreover, to bring about the conversion of the Princess Mary, a bigot to the tenets which her father had denounced, as much, perhaps, from the memory of her mother's wrongs, as from any conscientious conviction of their truth. But neither threats nor arguments produced the smallest effect. Mary beheld her chaplains committed to the Tower, and listened to the personal reasonings of her brother, but stated boldly that "her soul was God's, and her faith she would not change nor dissemble;" and was at last permitted to exercise in private the offices of her religion. It is probable, that in obtaining for her this indulgence, the interference of the Emperor, Charles V., was not without its effect; but the king was far from being satisfied with the arrangement, even though it had the concurrence of Cranmer, in whom his confidence was very great.

So far the Reformation in England was carried on without bloodshed; a remarkable proof of the wisdom, not less than of the humanity of the men to whom the youthful monarch gave his confidence. The year 1549 was rendered memorable by the execution of two fanatics; one a female, by name Joan Boucher, otherwise called Joan of Kent, the other, an eminent surgeon in London, though of Dutch extraction, called Von Parris. The former perished at the stake, a martyr to a phraseology, which, if it conveyed any distinct ideas to her own mind, is altogether unintelligible to us; the other, because he had denied the Divinity of the Saviour, and refused to recant the heresy. I have given these instances of the shedding of blood for conscience-sake, not for the purpose of defending them, but because they form the only exceptions to the rule of clemency and long-suffering, by which the proceedings of Cranmer, and his illustrious coadjutors, were guided.

Meanwhile Warwick, now raised to the rank of duke of Northumberland, carried on the general business of the country, as if power had been intrusted to him for the single purpose of promoting his own and his family's fortunes. A measure which he had loudly condemned in the projected policy of his predecessor, he himself adopted without scruple. He made peace with France and Scotland; though to purchase the forbearance of the first of these powers he was compelled to surrender Boulogne, on receiving the sum of four hundred thousand crowns as a compensation. Tunstal, bishop of Durham, who, though he had opposed every change in religion, submitted to the new order of things as soon as it was established, he threw into prison; and by an extraordinary stretch of authority, deprived him of his see. It was nominally divided into two bishoprics; while the regalities, including the jurisdiction of a county-palatine, were granted by the crown to Northumberland. This measure the Protector followed up

by wedding his sons and his daughters to the heirs of some of the most powerful families in the kingdom; nor were his views limited by any species of aggrandizement short of royalty itself.

Mention has been made of some of the dispositions in the will of Henry the Eighth: it is necessary to add, that it contained others in addition to these, which regulated, as far as it might be competent for Henry to do so, the order of succession to the throne. According to the principles of hereditary right, the crown might be claimed, after the princesses Mary and Elizabeth, first, by the descendants of Margaret Tudor, queen of Scotland, and, failing these, by the descendants of Mary Tudor, queen of France. Henry, who never forgave the slights offered to him by his nephew, passed by the Scottish line altogether, and required, that in the event of the death of his own children without legal heirs, the children of the queen of France should inherit. Of these there were two, namely, Frances, married to Henry Grey, first marquess of Dorset, afterwards duke of Suffolk; and Eleanor, who espoused Henry Clifford, earl of Cumberland. With the former of these families Northumberland contracted an alliance, by obtaining the hand of the lady Jane Grey for his son, lord Guilford Dudley; and bent all his energies to ensure for the young bride the right of succession to a throne, of which the vacancy could not be remote.

Meanwhile an attack of measles, to which the small-pox immediately succeeded, so weakened the constitution of the young king, that a cold which he caught by exposure to an inclement spring, terminated in an inflammation of the lungs. The disease gathered head from day to day, in spite of the best efforts of the physicians, and the spirits of the royal invalid became more and more depressed, in proportion as bodily weakness increased upon him. It was under these circumstances that Northumberland, taking advantage of his

zeal for the reformed faith, began to urge upon him the propriety of defending the church from the perils with which it must be threatened in the event of his own death, and the accession of a princess so bigoted as **Mary**. He represented that Mary had been pronounced illegitimate by the only tribunal qualified to decide the point, and that if the will of the late sovereign set the intention of the legislature aside, it was equally competent to his present majesty, to whom the rights of the crown had descended fully, to restore to such intentions the force of law. Edward listened to these suggestions with a fondness which did justice to the sincerity of his love for the cause of truth. He believed the reasoning to be sound, and would have nominated Elizabeth, had he not been reminded, that the legality of her claim rested on precisely the same footing as that of her sister, while the Scottish branch, being represented as altogether objectionable, no alternative appeared to be left. He determined to bequeath the sceptre to Jane Grey, a young lady not more remarkable for her beauty than her virtues, and to whom, as the companion of his childhood and early youth, he was himself warmly attached.

Having made up his mind to follow this course, Edward, who was confined to his chamber, in the palace of Greenwich, sent for the chief-justice of the Common Pleas, whom he commanded to draw up a settlement of the crown on the Lady Jane, the heiress of the house of Suffolk. Both the chief-justice, and the other judges who were consulted, refused to obey, till they had received the king's assurance that their pardon should be secured, and the sanction of parliament obtained, as soon after the execution of the deed as possible. Edward readily gave the pledge, which he did not live to redeem: for, having been withdrawn from the care of his physicians, and intrusted to an ignorant quack, he became, day by day, and hour by hour, more

feeble; and on the 6th of July, towards midnight, breathed his last, in the sixteenth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign.

The position of this young prince in English history between a tyrant and a bigot, may have doubtless added somewhat to the grace of his innocent and attractive character, yet the attractions of that character were at once too numerous and too striking to require the aid of this, or any other adventitious ornament. Gentle, docile, and remarkably affectionate, insatiable in its thirst of knowledge, and singularly retentive of every impression which it received, his was one of those minds which, arriving too soon at the full development of their powers, wear out, by continual exertion, the frames in which they are lodged. That such was the opinion, not of his avowed panegyrists only, but of all with whom he came into contact, we have the best ground to assert. Even Jerome Cardan, the celebrated Italian physician, a man nowise open to the charge of gratuitous flattery, has left upon record the results of an interview which he had with his royal patient. "He knew Latin and French well," says this singular man; "was not ignorant of Greek, Italian, and Spanish, and was not without a competent knowledge of logic, of physic, and music. A boy of such genius and reputation was a prodigy in human affairs. I do not speak with rhetorical exaggeration, but rather speak under the truth." But that which, more than anything besides, gave a tone to the character of this amiable prince, was his fervent and unaffected piety; a feeling which rarely displays itself, under any circumstances, in very early youth, and is still more rarely developed where youth is passed amid the temptations and gaieties of a court. No wonder that by those who knew him most intimately, and obeyed the principles of which he was so efficient a promoter, he should have been termed the Josias of his country. Yet is it past dis-

pute, that in the management of ecclesiastical affairs, Edward had imbibed somewhat too much of the spirit of his father. He consented too willingly to those acts of further spoliation which robbed the church of what little remained of her patrimony; and his determination to treat the bishops as mere officers of state, by requiring them to take out, like the judges, letters-patent, exhibits less acquaintance with the principles of his religion, than might have been expected in the pupil of Cranmer. Nevertheless, his death was deplored as a great national calamity, by all who had the cause of the Reformation at heart; and the events of a few months sufficed to show, that their lamentation had not been unnecessarily called forth.



Great Seal of Edward the Sixth

any alarm in the breasts of the most timid. Men saw in them only the effects of a grateful and a generous disposition; nor were the measures which followed, though of a somewhat different nature, such as to shake the confidence which they were willing to repose in their new sovereign.

The heads of the party which had espoused the cause of the lady Jane were committed, as was to be expected, to the Tower. These included the duke of Northumberland, the marquess of Northampton, the earl of Warwick, Northumberland's eldest son, lord Ambrose and lord Henry Dudley, two of his younger sons, Sir Andrew Dudley, his brother, the earl of Huntingdon, Sir Thomas Palmer, and Sir John Gates. The duke of Suffolk followed soon afterwards, as did the unfortunate lady Jane, and her equally unfortunate husband, lord Guilford Dudley. Most of these were, however, pardoned on pleading constraint; and even Suffolk himself recovered his liberty, owing in a great measure to the contempt in which his abilities were held. But for Northumberland, whose ambition and courage were too dangerous, there was no hope of escape. He was tried and condemned, together with Sir Thomas Palmer and Sir John Gates, Lady Jane and lord Guilford being included in the same sentence; and though the two latter were spared, chiefly through the compassion which their youth and innocence excited, the three former suffered death. It is worthy of remark, that Northumberland, when brought to the scaffold, avowed himself to have been all along an enemy to the Reformation, and exhorted the people, as they desired to enjoy rest and peace, to return into the bosom of the holy catholic church.

If the people were thus far disposed to hope for the best from their new sovereign, and to credit the assurances which she gave of her determination not to disturb the established religion, the lapse of a short

time sufficed to prove that they had grossly deceived themselves, and totally misunderstood her character. Naturally of a sour and obstinate temper, which contradiction and misfortunes tended only to harden, Mary possessed in an eminent degree all the qualities fitted to compose a bigot; and her extreme ignorance, while it rendered her incapable of distrusting the soundness of her own belief, barred her from extending to the opinions of others the slightest indulgence. No sooner did she feel herself secure upon the throne, than she proceeded to exercise, with unflinching boldness, the high prerogatives to which she laid claim as her hereditary right. All the deposed bishops were reinstated in their sees, by the sentence of a commission appointed to revise their trial and condemnation. The bishopric of Durham, though dissolved by an act of parliament, was re-erected; and Tunstal once more put in possession of his regalities, as well as his revenues. On the other hand, the Protestant usurpers, as they were termed, namely, Holgate of York, Coverdale of Exeter, Ridley of London, and Hooper of Gloucester, were cast into prison. It was to no purpose that Judge Hales protested against these acts of tyranny, or that the gentlemen of Suffolk ventured to remind her of the engagements into which she had voluntarily entered. Hales shared the fate of the prelates, whom he strove to protect, and died in prison by his own hand, during a fit of frenzy; while old Latimer, and the gentle and timid Cranmer, were not long permitted to exercise, the one his powers of invective, the other his reasonings and protestations, against the abuses of the times. They were both sent to the Tower; the former exclaiming, as he passed through that quarter of the city, that "Smithfield had long groaned for him."

Amid the terror which these proceedings were calculated to produce, and the anticipation of evils still more

pressing which they occasioned, the Protestants of England began to turn their eyes with anxiety, not unmingled with hope, towards the princess Elizabeth. During the reigns of her father and her brother she had lived in strict retirement, devoting her whole time to the acquisition of knowledge, and the improvement of her faculties; and now, under the pretext of a desire to return to her former occupations, she solicited and obtained permission to withdraw from court. But Elizabeth's well-known attachment to the reformed faith, while it secured to her the good-will of a majority in the nation, rendered her an object of jealousy, and even of fear, to her sister. Under these circumstances the emperor Charles, in whom she reposed great confidence, advised the queen to marry. His views in tendering this counsel were manifest enough, and Mary seems to have understood them; yet she caused advances to be made, first to the young earl of Devonshire, by whom they were rejected; and afterwards to Cardinal Pole, who had not yet entered into priest's orders, but who, being sincerely devoted to the studies and habits of his order, respectfully declined the match. Now, then, was the hand of Philip of Spain, the son of Charles the Fifth, and the heir of his extensive dominions, offered to Mary. She could not hide from herself that the connexion would be peculiarly distasteful to her subjects; for even Gardiner, to whom she had intrusted the great seal, and who now presided at her councils, objected to it. But Mary was not composed of such materials as would allow the wishes, or even the happiness of her people, to interfere in any way with the indulgence of her own humours. After having been solemnly crowned in Westminster Abbey, and obtaining from her parliament a reversal of her mother's divorce, she entered into a contract of marriage with Philip, in defiance of a respectful recommendation from the House of Commons, that she would wed an

Englishman, and the undisguised murmurs of the nation at large.

While this treaty of union was in progress, the zeal of the Roman Catholic priests urged them to overstep the law, and to restore, in all places whithersoever their influence extended, the ceremonies and observances of their religion. Even in the House of Lords mass was celebrated, in Latin, and a Protestant bishop, who refused to join in the ceremony, was pushed with rudeness from his place. The people, connecting these circumstances with the impending alliance with one who had shown himself the bitter enemy of the Reformation, and of its professors, throughout Germany, became every day more and more dissatisfied. A plan of revolt was devised, which had, in its first outline, some chance of success. Sir Thomas Wyatt, a gentleman of influence in Kent, undertook to raise that county. The duke of Suffolk engaged to arm his own tenants, and to lift the standard of Protestantism in the midland districts; while sir Peter Carew engaged to excite the men of Devonshire. At the same time, the French ambassador promised, in his master's name, to procure assistance from abroad, and Elizabeth was earnestly importuned to place herself at the head of the movement. But Elizabeth's prudence was even then remarkable: though harassed by her sister into a feigned conformity with the religion of Rome, and irritated by the stain of bastardy which was impressed upon her birth, she refused to take any part in the conspiracy. Still she knew, that whatever the results of the attempt might be, suspicion must inevitably attach to her; she therefore watched the progress of events, from her retirement, with an intensity of interest of which language is probably unequal to convey an idea.

It was the original intention of the concocters of this plot to rest quiet till Philip should have landed.

The fears or the impatience of Carew hurried him into a premature disclosure of the secret. He raised his standard ere his colleagues were in a condition to support him; and was put down with very little difficulty. Suffolk, who, with his brothers lord Thomas and lord Leonard Grey, hastened into Warwickshire, was, in like manner, pursued, his followers dispersed, and himself made prisoner. In Kent, a better fortune attended, for awhile, the efforts of Wyatt. The people flocked to him in large numbers; and of the troops sent out to oppose him, in which were included five hundred Londoners, a considerable proportion deserted their colours. Had Wyatt marched boldly upon London while the panic occasioned by the rumoured defection was at its height, there would have, probably, been an end at once to the influence of popery and the reign of its protectress; but finding the bridges broken down, he made a detour as far as Kingston, where he crossed the Thames at his leisure, and wasted so much time in his progress afterwards, that the effects of his first success were dissipated. No person of consequence came to meet him in Westminster, and his levies fell off so fast, that when he reached Temple-bar, he marched comparatively unattended. He was seized by sir Maurice Berkeley, after a brave resistance, and committed to the Tower.

Exasperated by this attempt to shake her throne, and rendered more powerful by reason of its failure, Mary hastened to wreak her vengeance upon all whom she suspected to have either encouraged or taken part in the revolt. Suffolk, with his brothers, sir Thomas Wyatt, and about four hundred more, suffered death; and their heads, "the heads," according to Noailles, the French ambassador, "of the bravest men in the kingdom," were set up as a mark of ignominy on the public buildings in the city. But that which excited public sympathy more than any other circum-

stance connected with this rebellion, was the execution of the beautiful and innocent lady Jane Grey and her ill-fated husband. They were beheaded within the Tower on the same day, and almost at the same moment; for the unhappy wife, while in the act of being conducted to the scaffold, met the headless trunk of her lord, which the guards were conveying for sepulture to the chapel.

In the anticipations which she had formed of the effects upon herself of a failure in the projected insurrection, Elizabeth was not deceived. She had been permitted, in the beginning of December, to retire to Ashbridge, where she carefully shunned all intercourse with strangers, and awaited, in extreme anxiety, the issue of events. On the 1st of February, immediately after Wyatt's discomfiture, a body of troops, under competent officers, arrived to arrest her. Elizabeth was seriously indisposed, and refused to see them that night, for they reached the house after she had retired to rest; but they forced their way into her bed-room, and compelled her to rise. Elizabeth's illness was not, however, feigned. Probably it was occasioned by nervous agitation; but, however this may be, her very gaolers were obliged to sanction unusual delays in the journey, and even doubted whether she would ever reach the capital alive. But youth and a good constitution carried her through; and a close confinement in the Tower, with the prospect of a fatal termination, served not to cause a relapse. Nevertheless her enemies, though thirsting for her blood, failed to obtain even the shadow of a proof against her; because Wyatt had declared, with his dying breath, that she was no party to the rebellion; and the state of men's minds was not such as to render an open and undisguised murder advisable. The rigour of her confinement was gradually relaxed; and she was at last sent to Woodstock, where, under the surveillance

of a miscreant, named sir Henry Bedingfield, she spent some time in sufficient discomfort.

On the 19th of July, 1554, Philip landed at Southampton, attended by a train of Spanish grandees, Burgundian nobles, and four thousand well-armed and well-appointed soldiers. On the 25th, his marriage with the queen was solemnized in Westminster Abbey, of which the effects were immediately apparent, in a total change of manners and habits about the court. Every thing there assumed a stately reserve. The king and queen, avoiding the society of the nobles, took up their residence at Hampton Court, and "no man might enter the hall-door unless his errand were first known, which seemed strange to Englishmen." These, however, were but the external marks of a change of manner and disposition in the rulers of England; they were soon followed by other and more startling innovations. A parliament, elected under the management of Gardiner, was easily persuaded to reverse the attainder in blood "of the lord cardinal Pole," and to consent to such measures as were proposed for the reconciliation of the realm to the sovereign pontiff, and Pole received the dignity of legate. He passed over into his native country, and, on the 29th of November, 1554, re-admitted, with due solemnity, the erring people and parliament of England into the bosom of what he called the true church. It is but candid to add, that in thus consenting to re-establish ordinances, which they had so often and so recently condemned as idolatrous, the noblemen and gentlemen of England took care that no more substantial demands should be made upon their good-nature. They positively refused to restore to the church any portion of the lands or tithes of which she had been plundered; and the Pope, aware that he must either receive the penitents on their own terms, or lose them altogether, permitted his representative to wave this claim.

The year 1555 opened under the saddest and darkest auspices to the now devoted Protestants. In the previous session of parliament, an act had passed for the revival of the statutes of Richard the Second, Henry the Fourth, and Henry the Fifth, against heretics; which revival was to take effect from the 20th of January, 1555; and the fatal day was not long come and gone ere the flames of martyrdom began to burn. After a solemn embassy had been sent to Rome, to lay at the feet of his holiness the penitential offering of his erring children; after the bishops, in a body, had repaired to Lambeth, where cardinal Pole was now installed, to receive his blessing; after Bonner, with eight bishops, and one hundred and sixty priests, had made a procession through London, to deprecate the wrath of Heaven, and to return thanks for the renewal of Divine grace, a commission, at the head of which was Gardiner, sat in the church of St. Mary Overies, Southwark, for the trial of Protestants. The first individuals brought before them were Rogers, a prebendary of St. Paul's, and Hooper, the deposed and degraded bishop of Gloucester. The former, when questioned, and brow-beaten by his judge, demanded, "Did not you pray against the Pope for twenty years?" "I was forced by cruelty," answered Gardiner. "And will you," replied Rogers, "use cruelty to us?" But such an appeal availed nothing. The good man, having in vain besought permission to bid his wife and children farewell, was carried to Smithfield; and there, almost in the sight of the partner of his happier moments, who met him as he went, with an infant at the breast, perished in the flames. The fate of Hooper was not dissimilar. He was sent to die in his episcopal city; and either through negligence, or, which is more probable, a refinement of cruelty, the wood set apart for the sacrifice proved to be so green, that he

endured the tortures of martyrdom for three-quarters of an hour, ere life became extinct.

The flames, once kindled in the capital, were soon made to blaze in other parts of the kingdom. The cruelties, indeed, which were perpetrated for several years, under the pretext of advancing true religion, would almost surpass belief, did not their record depend upon authority which there is no gainsaying. Men, women, and even children, died a death, of which the bare contemplation causes the blood to curdle; nor were instances wanting of infants being brought into the world, while their mothers were undergoing the pains and earning the crown of martyrdom. It is not my intention to describe these scenes in detail, nor to dwell longer on a subject against which humanity revolts; but the circumstances attending the execution of three of the great fathers of the Reformation, Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer, had in them so much of singularity, that my purpose would scarcely be complete were I to pass them by unnoticed.

The characters of Ridley and Latimer, both as scholars and divines, presented at least as many points of contrariety as of agreement. The first was moderate, learned, and reflective; the last, bold, simple, frank, and thoroughly uncompromising. Having been tried and convicted of heresy, they were ordered to suffer death by burning; and Oxford was named as the city in which the execution should take place. They were accordingly led out into a wide street, and tied to the stake; the executioners, probably with the humane desire of lessening their sufferings, having fastened round the middle of each a bag of gunpowder. During the interval when the faggots were in the act of being lighted, Ridley addressed some words of pious consolation to his companion. The undaunted Latimer scarcely heard him out: "Fear not, good brother,"

replied he, "but be of good cheer. We shall this day kindle such a torch in England, as I trust in God shall never be extinguished." Soon after he had spoken, the flames reached the gunpowder, and he was blown to atoms. Ridley suffered longer and more intensely; but after his frame had been consumed to ashes, it is said that his heart was found entire,—an emblem, as his contemporaries declare, of the firmness with which he gave his body to be burned for the truth's sake.

The fate of Cranmer was, in many respects, more melancholy, perhaps more instructive, than that of his brothers in suffering. He was first convicted of high-treason, but obtained, on his earnest supplication for mercy, the queen's pardon. Hating the man both on public and on private grounds, she desired to destroy his character as well as his life; and it must be confessed that she had well-nigh succeeded. Being transferred from the Tower to Oxford, he was arraigned on a charge of heresy, before a court constituted with a marked attention to form, and by a commission obtained direct from Rome. He defended himself with great modesty as well as talent; but from such a court only one verdict was to be anticipated;—he was found guilty. The fear of death seems to have operated with extraordinary force upon Cranmer. Again he implored the queen's mercy, in terms partaking too much of the abject; and being beset by many temptations,—by the terrors of the stake on one hand, by promises of favour and protection on the other,—in an evil hour his constancy gave way, and he signed a recantation. The triumph of his enemy was now complete. Notwithstanding this humiliating act, the sentence of death was confirmed; and he was carried, as custom required, into the church of St. Mary, where an appropriate sermon was preached.

During the whole time of divine service, Cranmer kept his eyes rivetted on the ground, while the tears

chased one another, in rapid course, over his cheeks. The audience attributed his emotion to remorse; and it was expected, when he indicated a desire to address the populace, that he would before them acknowledge the enormity of his transgressions, and ask their prayers. But the bigots who harboured this idea had deluded themselves. After running over a sort of history of his past career, he came at length to the period of his trial, of which he summed up the narrative in the following words:—"Now I am come to the great thing which troubleth my conscience more than any other thing that I ever said or did in my life, and that is, the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth; which here now I renounce and refuse as things written with my hand, contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and writ for fear of death, and to save my life if might be, and that is all such papers as I have written or signed since my degradation, wherein I have written many things untrue. And forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand, when I come to the fire, shall be first burned." The penitent was as good as his word. As soon as the flames began to arise, he thrust his right hand into them, and held it there till it was consumed. His end resembled, in other respects, those of his fellows in affliction.

During more than three years, these dreadful scenes continued to be acted, till there had perished at the stake not fewer than two hundred and ninety individuals, among whom were five bishops, twenty-one clergymen, eight lay gentlemen, fifty-five women, and four children. Elizabeth herself narrowly escaped the same fate, inasmuch as Gardiner, though weary of the slaughter of minor offenders, ventured, more than once, to hint, that "to cut down the leaves while the root was permitted to flourish was at once discreditable and impolitic." Strange to say, however, she owed her preservation to Philip,

who, finding the hopes of offspring which Mary had early given him vanish, was unwilling that the succession should be secured to the queen of Scots, now the daughter-in-law of Henry of France, his hereditary enemy. But Elizabeth, if she escaped death, suffered more than the usual extremities of imprisonment; her very attendants being occasionally debarred from approaching her, and all intercourse with the world cut off. Meanwhile, multitudes of the most pious and enlightened members of society fled from a land where there was no safety for their lives, and took refuge, some in Denmark, some in Switzerland, some in the free city of Frankfort, and others in Geneva. They were received wherever they went with open arms; and being driven, by abhorrence of their persecutors, into a persuasion that it was impossible to deviate too widely from the Popish usages, not a few embraced with eagerness opinions which were alike hostile to episcopacy in the church and to monarchy in the state. Thus was a new impulse given to that sour and fanatical spirit, which had already shown itself during the reigns of Henry and of Edward, of which England was yet doomed to reap the fruits, in long years of civil war and military oppression.

Heartless as he was, it cannot with truth be said that Philip of Spain had any share in the guilt of these persecutions. His views, indeed, were turned to a widely different object than the restoration of the Pope's authority in England, and his endeavours were unceasing to engage Mary and the English people to adopt these views, and to promote them. Over the queen his influence was supreme. She loved him with a doting fondness, and strove, by humouring his most unreasonable caprices, to thaw the icy coldness of his manner; but though he threatened to abandon her for ever unless she could induce the parliament to engage in a war with France, more than all her powers of per-

suasion were required to attain that object. An artifice at length accomplished that, which reasoning and entreaty had equally failed in obtaining. It chanced that Thomas Stafford, a descendant of the house of Buckingham, and an exile, with many others, on account of his religion, landed, in 1557, with a band of followers, at Scarborough, and captured the castle. As he had equipped his armament in France, such good use was made of the circumstance, that Henry the Second was made to bear the blame. The parliament, though with great reluctance, gave consent that war should be declared. Seven thousand men, including a thousand horse, were forthwith despatched into Flanders, where they found the Spanish army, then commanded by the illustrious duke of Savoy; and did good service both in the battle of St. Quentin, where the Constable de Montmorency sustained a defeat, and in the subsequent assault and capture of the castle.

Had Philip, who, by the resignation of his father, now filled the Spanish throne, followed up with becoming celerity this brilliant victory, he might have dictated his own terms of peace at the gates of Paris; but Philip was by far too cautious to earn the laurels of a conqueror, and after reducing one or two places of less note, withdrew into winter-quarters. Henry, obeying the counsels of his general, the duke of Guise, made haste to improve the leisure thus afforded. He levied fresh armies, put his frontier-towns in a posture of defence, and gave his sanction to a measure, the very boldness of which contributed mainly to its success. It had long been customary for the English to weaken, during the winter months, the garrison of Calais, under the idea that a considerable saving was thereby effected, without the incurrence of any serious risk. They trusted, it appeared, partly to the effects of ancient prejudice, partly to the strength of the place, which, when the marshes overflowed, or the ground was covered with

snow, they were accustomed to esteem impregnable. The duke of Guise resolved to put the truth of this judgment to the test. About the beginning of January, 1558, he marched towards the coast, and making himself master, by surprise, of the castle of St. Agatha and Newnam bridge, passed the dike, and opened batteries against the citadel. Within the space of one week from the crossing of the dike, the governor found himself under the necessity of capitulating, and England was deprived of the last of her continental possessions,—which it had cost not less than eleven months to win, and upon the towers of which her flag had floated for something more than two centuries.

The joy experienced in France at this important conquest was inferior in degree to the grief and mortification of the English; who, as is their wont, attributed to treason in the governor, a misfortune for which their own mistaken views of economy were alone to blame. Upon the queen, in particular, weighed down with a sense of her own unpopularity, and afflicted by a disease which had once excited hopes of a different issue, this fresh calamity produced the most distressing effects: she could not appeal to her husband to comfort her, for he had deserted her; among her subjects she had no friends, for they feared not less than they hated her; and her sister Elizabeth, from whom alone she might have looked for sympathy and consolation, was to herself an object of unmitigated abhorrence. It was to no purpose that she strove, by engaging in public business, to overcome the chagrin which preyed upon her vitals. While fresh fleets and armies were equipped, with the single view, as the event proved, of enabling Philip to negotiate a peace on terms more favourable to himself, she sickened and died, after a short and uneasy reign of five years, four months, and eleven days.

The character of Mary has been drawn by Mr. Hume in terms so just, that I cannot better conclude my sum-

mary of her career, than by transferring them to these pages. "She possessed few qualities," says our great historian, "either estimable or amiable; and her person was as little engaging as her behaviour and address. Obstinacy, bigotry, violence, cruelty, malignity, revenge, tyranny,—every circumstance of her character took a tincture from her bad temper and narrow understanding. And amidst that complication of vices which entered her composition, we shall scarcely find any virtue but sincerity; a quality which she seems to have maintained throughout her whole life, except in the beginning of her reign, when the necessity of her affairs obliged her to make some promises to the Protestants, which she certainly never intended to perform. She appears, also, as well as her father, to have been susceptible of some attachments of friendship; and that without the caprice and inconsistency which were so remarkable in the conduct of that monarch." Among these there was none more striking, either in its progress or termination, than that which bound her to her accomplished relative, the Cardinal Pole. Her respect for his piety was equalled only by his devotion to her interests; and it is a remarkable fact, that they both lay ill at the same time, and both expired within seventeen hours the one of the other.

The era of Mary's reign is memorable for various occurrences, both at home and abroad, of the most important of which it may be worth while to give a brief summary.

1. In 1545, was held the first session of the famous council of Trent, the last which has met in Europe, under the immediate sanction of the Pope, for the transaction of business. It was called for the ostensible purpose of devising means by which the dismembered and divided Church might be reunited; and it threw, by its decrees, fresh difficulties, which will never, perhaps, be surmounted, in the way of so desirable a consummation.

2. Of the establishment of the Inquisition, in the thirteenth century, I have not considered it necessary to take notice, because it originated in circumstances with which England was very little concerned, and never made its way, even partially, into this country. During the reign of Mary, however, a project was seriously entertained of extending its influence over the whole of Europe; and if England escaped the bitter visitation, she undoubtedly owed her deliverance rather to the temper of the people, than the consideration of the sovereign.

3. The same period of time witnessed the development of that extraordinary institution, which owed its rise to the ardent and meditative temper of a Spanish gentleman, by name Ignatius or Inigo Loyola, and which, under the appellation of the Society of Jesus, came, ere long, to exercise an influence, not only in the courts of European princes, but among the barbarians of Asia, Africa, and America. Concerning the merits and demerits of that admirably-organized society, I am not now called upon to give an opinion. That it accomplished some good purposes, more especially by introducing the emollient arts of life into regions whither the foot of the civilized traveller had never before entered, the record of the proceedings of Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies, demonstrates; but that these partial benefits to humanity were much more than counterbalanced by the uses to which other members of the society turned their influence elsewhere, many a dark page in the history of Europe attests. The society of the Jesuits was, indeed, instituted for the avowed purpose of opposing the rebellious and heretical spirit of the Lutheran age; and its members have never permitted any womanish pity, or an overstrained sense of right and wrong, to check them in the pursuit of that great end.

4. While the throne was filled by Edward the Sixth,
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certain adventurous voyagers, in search of a north-east passage to India, were driven by stress of weather into the harbour of Archangel. They opened from that point a trade with the interior, which was carried on for some time, rather by the connivance than with the sanction of the public authorities. A solemn embassy, the first which had ever ventured into the west, was, however, sent by the Czar, John Basilovitch, to Queen Mary. It led to a treaty of commerce and friendship, from which England derived many advantages; the woollen-cloths and coarse linens fabricated here being exchanged, at an immense profit, for the skins and furs of the northern regions.

5. A law was passed in this reign, for the better protection of the realm, by which the number of horses, arms, and furniture, was specified, which each person, in proportion to the extent of his property, should have ready against the hour of need. Among the list of offensive weapons, we find the long-bow still holding its place of pre-eminence, notwithstanding the introduction of the harquebuss, or matchlock. We may remark, that in classifying the persons subject to these burdens, a man of a thousand marks of stock was rated equal to one of two-hundred pounds a-year, a proof that few were accustomed at that time to live on their capital, so that the returns from money embarked in trade were very great. There seems to have been no class above two thousand pounds a-year.

6. Some idea may be formed of the domestic manners of those times, when it is stated, that the yearly rental of a mansion in London, fit for the occupation of a great officer of state, amounted to thirty shillings in our money: that the halls of the nobility, as well as the floors of the peasantry, were strewn with rushes; and that even in considerable towns there were few houses to which a chimney was attached, the fires being kindled by the side of the wall, and the smoke

permitted to escape as it best could, through the windows. In general, the people slept on straw pallets, and they used round logs of timber for pillows, and had almost all their utensils and furniture made of wood.

7. In the reign of Edward the Sixth, lords lieutenants of counties were for the first time appointed. In that of Mary, we find the first general law with reference to highways, which were ordered to be repaired, throughout the kingdom, by parish rates.



Great Seal of Philip and Mary.

CHAPTER II.

ELIZABETH.—HER RELIGIOUS POLICY.—RELIGIOUS WARS IN FRANCE.—AFFAIRS OF SCOTLAND.—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.—MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.—RENEWAL OF RELIGIOUS WARS.—THE LOW COUNTRIES REBEL AGAINST SPAIN.

[A. D. 1558 to A. D. 1603.]

WHATEVER men's opinions might be, both as to the legitimacy of Elizabeth's birth, and the probable tenour of her policy, she ascended the vacant throne without opposition. On the evening of that day which witnessed her sister's decease, she was proclaimed; and the shouts of the multitude, as well as the mutual congratulations of their superiors, gave evidence of the joy with which the announcement was every where received. Elizabeth was at Hatfield when these events befell. She lost no time in repairing to the metropolis, where the reception that awaited her could not fail to excite strong emotions in the breast of one who had lived so long under the pressure of such severe restraint, and the anticipation of worse evils in the future.

Trained, in the school of adversity, to exercise a perfect command over herself, Elizabeth displayed, in her first public proceedings, not less of wisdom than of moderation. She received all who approached her with perfect frankness, and refused her countenance, even among the bishops, to Bonner alone. She declared her intention of retaining in her service the most distinguished members of the late cabinet; and entreated such as she might judge it expedient to remove, to attribute the circumstance to no want of

confidence in their integrity, or distrust of their talents. Nevertheless there were not wanting clouds in the political horizon, from which the favourers of the Roman Catholic religion were led to augur a storm. In addition to the popish noblemen and gentlemen whom she selected from among the advisers of the late queen, Elizabeth took into her confidence eight individuals, all of them men of talent and determination, and yet all of them avowed favourers of the Protestant church. These were the marquess of Northampton, the earl of Bedford, sir Thomas Parry, sir Edward Rogers, sir Ambrose Cave, sir Francis Knolles, sir Nicholas Bacon, whom she created lord-keeper, and sir William Cecil, secretary of state. It is necessary to add, that while the majority in the council were treated with a reserve, which reduced them to the rank of mere pageants of state, the favoured minority shared the most secret thoughts, and assisted in the most confidential deliberations of their mistress.

The contemplation of these arrangements, as well as the exercise of the prerogative in a manner which indicated a considerable leaning in favour of the Protestants, excited equal alarm and indignation among the leaders of the popish party. They remembered what Elizabeth had been in early youth, and entirely distrusting her forced conformity of later years, they anticipated still more important changes so soon as her authority should be confirmed. It was accordingly arranged among the prelates, that they should refuse to assist at the coronation, for which, as a step preparative to the assembling of a new parliament, and then considered indispensable, the day was already fixed. But neither this, nor the foolish conduct of the Pope, to whom, among other foreign potentates, she communicated the fact of her succession, at all disturbed the equanimity of Elizabeth. Of Paul's insolent demand, that she should renounce a crown, from which the

illegitimacy of her birth precluded her, she took no other notice than by withdrawing her ambassador from his court; while the use of such arguments as princes are sometimes willing, and always able, to apply, prevailed upon one member of the episcopal college, to separate from his brethren. On the 15th of January, 1559, Elizabeth was crowned with great pomp; the bishop of Carlisle performing the ceremony.

In almost all parts of the country, the elections had gone in favour of the court,—and the commons, when called together, were found to consist, by a very large majority, of Protestant members. They opened the business of the session by acknowledging the queen as rightful heir to the throne, without, however, entering into the question of her mother's divorce, or her own legitimacy; and proceeded next to order such changes in matters of religion, as appeared to the cautious eyes of the sovereign to be judicious. Certain new monasteries, which Mary had erected, were dissolved. The tenths and first-fruits, which she had restored to the church, and assigned for the augmentation of small livings, were again granted to the crown. The Pope's supremacy was abolished, and to the sovereign were committed powers to repress all heresies, to repeal canons, and alter points of discipline. Though these bills met with a strong opposition in the House of Lords, they nevertheless passed; and Elizabeth, seeing that they were well received by the people, went forward in her career. Acts were obtained to abolish the mass, to restore the form and ceremonies of worship which had prevailed in Edward's reign, and to effect other changes; till, in due time, the Church of England was built up after the fashion which she still retains, in all essential points connected both with her internal constitution and her external forms. Nor ought the fact to be concealed, that this mighty revolution was brought about without exciting any commotion in the

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land, or causing even a drop of blood to be shed. The bishops, indeed, with one exception, refused to adopt the new order of things. They were, in consequence, deprived; but among the inferior clergy, a large proportion conformed themselves to the doctrines and discipline of the Church as now established.

In the mean while the foreign affairs of the country were conducted in a manner which, if it lie open, in some degree, to the charge of duplicity, was well calculated to confirm the authority of the queen, and to secure the liberties and the religion of her subjects. By the treaty of Cateau Cambresis, an end was put to a war, which, as it had in the beginning no reference to the advancement of English interests, so, in its progress, it redounded little to English glory. All claim upon Calais was, indeed, abandoned; for the obligation under which Henry came, of restoring the place within eight years, was felt by all reflecting persons to be illusory. But Elizabeth knew that, if she made up her mind to continue the war till the stipulation in question should be fulfilled, the struggle would, in all probability, wear out the strength of one or both of the rival princes. It was better, therefore, to relinquish, with a good grace, a possession important solely for purposes of offence, than, with an exhausted exchequer and a load of debt, contracted by her father and her sister, to persevere in hostilities out of which no beneficial results were likely to arise.

Peace with France led, as a matter of course, to peace with Scotland; and Elizabeth, recognised by the emperor, an offer of whose hand she evaded rather than declined, would have felt herself secure, but for the extravagant ambition of the princes of the house of Guise, and the ill-judged acquiescence in their scheme, of her cousin, the queen of Scots. Of the removal, in early youth, of this princess to France,

mention has elsewhere been made, as well as of her betrothal to the Dauphin, with whom a marriage was in due time completed. By this arrangement it was justly conceived that Scotland would become, to all intents and purposes, an appendage to France, and the house of Guise, elated by the idea that through them so important an acquisition had been made, permitted their views to extend further, and carried those of the French monarch along with them. They represented, that the attainder of Elizabeth's blood had never been reversed, even by an English parliament; that the marriage of her father with her mother had been pronounced null, by sentence of the church; and that now, Mary of Scotland, though passed by in the will of Henry the Eighth, was, by right of descent, entitled to the throne. Mary herself, a beautiful girl of eighteen, was easily persuaded to adopt these views, and both she and her husband, besides quartering the English arms with their own, assumed the style of king and queen of Scotland and England.

Sensitively alive to the insult thus offered, Elizabeth remonstrated with the French cabinet, which represented the act as one of retaliation merely (for Elizabeth absurdly retained the title of queen of France), and left the question of right unnoticed. It suited the views of Cecil and his colleagues to pretend, with this answer, a degree of satisfaction, which neither they nor their mistress experienced. They had just affixed their signatures to a treaty of peace, and were unwilling to stultify themselves, by rekindling, on such grounds, the flames of war. But while they carefully abstained from open hostilities, they ceased not to devise measures for weakening the power of those whom it was impossible to regard except as enemies; and the condition of Scotland at the time, torn by religious controversies and civil strife, afforded them the best opportunity of doing so.

It is admitted by a writer, not usually prompt to denounce the errors of his own communion*, that "of all the European churches, there was, perhaps, not one better prepared to receive the seed of the new gospel, than that of Scotland." This is accounted for by the fact, that during a long course of years, the highest dignities had, with few exceptions, been possessed by the illegitimate or younger sons of the most powerful families; men, who without learning or morality themselves, paid little attention to the learning or morality of their inferiors. In a country so circumstanced, where "the pride of the clergy, their negligence in the discharge of their functions, and the rigour with which they exacted their dues, had become favourite subjects of popular censure," it cannot surprise us to learn, that the doctrines of the Reformation, wherever they were preached, made numerous converts. Unfortunately, however, the tide of innovation, instead of being propelled and directed, was opposed by the supreme authorities; and that which had been accomplished in England, by due course of law, was, in the sister kingdom, sought to be attained by rebellion. It is not within my province to describe either the beginning of that movement, or the events which characterized it. Enough is done when I state, that the populace, indignant at the severities inflicted upon some of their teachers, and inflamed into madness by the preaching of others, set law and order alike at defiance, and, in the face of day, burned churches, pillaged monasteries, and committed other excesses. No government could permit such a state of things to continue. The queen-regent denounced, in severe terms, the perpetrators of these atrocities, and summoned to Stirling the most forward among their abettors, in order that they might there undergo a trial.

* Dr. Lingard.

The preachers obeyed the royal mandate, but they were accompanied by such a concourse of adherents, that the regent, apprehensive of what might follow, suspended the proceedings. A sort of compromise was entered into, which it suited the purposes of neither party to observe; and, after the lapse of a few weeks, they were again arrayed one against the other. It is not, however, to be imagined, that the reformers, all the while, looked to the preachers alone as their leaders. Knox and his coadjutors, doubtless, fanned the flame, as, from time to time, it began to smoulder; but there were other and more influential personages, who, actuated, some by religious principles, some by less worthy motives, directed the great movement, and guided it to their own purposes. The earls of Argyle, Morton, and Glencarne, the lord Lorne, Erskine of Dun, and others, entered privately into a band, or association, called themselves the Congregation of the Lord, in contradistinction to the established church, which they designated the congregation of Satan, and published a solemn protest against the corruptions of popery. This led to a more regular system of attack on the one hand, and defence on the other; till the whole kingdom re-echoed to the bustle of preparation, and the tramp of hostile armies.

For some time the regent, though counting among her friends the earls of Arran and Huntley, and supported by a corps of two or three thousand veteran French troops, found some difficulty in maintaining her ground against the insurgents. They surpassed her so much in numbers, that she was compelled, for the most part, to avoid a battle, and town after town fell into their hands, not excepting the capital itself. But the armies of the congregation were totally undisciplined, and as they served without pay, the soldiers composing them scrupled not to desert their standards, as often as caprice directed, or the pressure of famine became severe. On all such occasions the regent rolled back the tide of

victory. Fresh treaties were then entered into, only that they might be broken, so soon as either party was in a condition to do so with safety; when fresh outrages were again committed, and the war was resumed. Thus the scale vibrated from side to side, without giving a permanent superiority to either; till the death of Henry the Second, and the consequent succession of Francis and Mary to the French throne, caused the aspect of affairs to undergo an important change.

On the 9th of July, 1559, the regent had agreed to a pacification, by the terms of which she bound herself to keep Edinburgh unsullied by the presence of a foreign garrison, and to permit the free and public profession of the reformed faith, in every part of Scotland. The congregation had striven, though in vain, to obtain a dismissal of the mercenaries altogether; but if they failed to accomplish that object, they attained one scarcely less important, by bringing over to their views the earl of Arran, now duke of Chatelherault, and the earl of Huntley. These noblemen, who had followed the queen during the late commotions, and had access to observe the dangerous tendency of her councils, abhorred the yoke which she was preparing for their country, and determined rather to endanger the religion which they professed, than to be in any manner instrumental to its imposition. They held a conference with Argyle and his friends, and pledged themselves, either to compel the dismissal of the obnoxious foreigners, or to espouse, with all their influence, the cause of the congregation. To dismiss her mercenaries, however, not only formed no part of the regent's design, but she was even then preparing to increase them, when the event to which reference has just been made befell, and what had hitherto been the secret, became henceforth the open, I had almost said, the avowed, policy of the French court.

Towards the end of the month there arrived at Leith

a reinforcement of a thousand French soldiers,—the advanced guard, as was unblushingly given out, of a still more formidable force. The duke of Chatelherault, whose son had escaped destruction only by a precipitate flight from Paris, instantly went over to the congregation, and the Protestants resumed the arms which they can scarcely be said to have ever laid aside. A council of their chiefs was held, when two important resolutions were passed,—first, that the queen-regent should be formally deposed, and, secondly, that Elizabeth should be solicited, as the great champion of the reformed faith, to aid them in their struggle against civil and religious tyranny. The former of these resolutions was immediately carried into effect, with all the formality which the circumstances of the times would allow, while to accomplish the second, steps were promptly taken.

Hitherto Elizabeth had been somewhat niggardly in the aid which she afforded to the rebellious subjects of a sister queen. That she fomented the rebellion is beyond dispute, and that sums of money were occasionally furnished to the leaders, is equally certain; but Elizabeth entertained very correct ideas of what was due to independent governments in the abstract; and therefore kept as much as possible out of sight in these transactions. She was now prevailed upon by Cecil to relax in these respects. It was made clear to her that the designs of the house of Guise were not limited to the conquest of Scotland. England was destined to sustain an attack, and it was argued, with some show of justice, that it were better to fight the battle in a foreign country, than to wait till her own realm should be assailed. When, therefore, the agents of the congregation laid their petitions before the cabinet, they were received with the greatest attention; and orders were forthwith issued to equip a fleet, and organize an army for service.

The succours thus promised by Elizabeth arrived in good time to sustain the declining cause of the Scottish insurgents. Unable to keep the field against the French, they had retreated into Fifeshire, when an English squadron of thirteen ships of war unexpectedly appeared in the Firth, and the face of affairs underwent an immediate change. They who had recently carried all before them, now became fugitives, and shutting themselves up in Leith, which they had carefully fortified, sustained a long and arduous siege. But though successful in more than one skirmish, the French lost all confidence, when their fleet, which conveyed reinforcements, was dispersed by a storm; and the queen-regent, a woman of extraordinary talents and firmness, expired. They surrendered Leith on capitulation, and were permitted to return to France, after pledging themselves, through the Bishop of Valence and Count Randan, their leaders, that Mary and Francis would renounce all claim to the English crown, and that the affairs of Scotland should be administered by a regency, to be appointed partly by the queen, and partly by the states, till she should find it convenient to return to her native country, and take the reins of government into her own hands.

The ability as well as the moderation with which Elizabeth conducted this delicate enterprise, deserve all the commendation which has been bestowed upon them. While she anticipated and defeated the designs of her enemies, she took no ungenerous advantage of the position of her friends; but withdrew her forces from Scotland, without exacting any concessions from the congregation, except those which a sense of gratitude, and a conviction of their own interests, prompted them to tender. Mary and Francis, however, obeying the suggestions of the duke of Guise, refused to ratify the treaty of Leith, and continued to bear the arms, and to claim the title, which they had been required to lay

aside. But the state of France at this time was not such as to leave them either the means or the leisure to attempt any thing further. There, as well as elsewhere, the reformed faith had made many converts, and the king of Navarre, the prince of Condé, the admiral Coligni, and other chiefs, casting aside all disguise, became the acknowledged leaders of what gradually grew up into a powerful political party. To these Elizabeth was neither slow nor niggardly in furnishing supplies, and a series of intrigues ensued, into which my limits will not permit me to enter. They ended in the arrest of Condé and of the king of Navarre, both of whom were cast into prison, under circumstances which cut off, at least from the former, all hope of preserving even his life. But at the moment when his enemies were preparing to execute a sentence which they had with indecent haste obtained against him, Francis died; an event which not only restored the prisoners to freedom and to power, but caused a complete revolution in the government of France.

Catherine de Medicis, the queen-mother, to whom, during the minority of Charles the Ninth, the regency was intrusted, had conceived a violent dislike to Mary Queen of Scots, to whose influence, not less than to the machinations of the house of Guise, she attributed the many mortifications which, during the late king's reign, she had undergone. She sought to avenge these wrongs, by putting every possible slight upon her daughter-in-law, who began, in consequence, to think of withdrawing from a country, the ties that bound her to which were severed. Mary applied to Elizabeth for a safe conduct, in case she should be obliged to pass through England. The request was peremptorily refused, except upon the condition, that Mary would ratify the treaty of Edinburgh, and, by so doing, relieve her cousin from the apprehensions which she still entertained. For Elizabeth, though she felt

that there was no further danger to be apprehended from the side of France, knew that among her own subjects the Catholic Mary had numerous partizans; and, with all her masculine courage, she was unable to overcome the uneasiness which the conviction of that truth was calculated to excite. But Mary, equally high-spirited with her relative, refused to subscribe to these terms. In a secret conference with Throgmorton, she laid open her mind, perhaps with more of candour than of discretion; and wound up by declaring, "I can, with God's leave, return to my own country without her leave, as I came to France in spite of all the opposition of her brother, King Edward; neither do I want friends, able and willing to conduct me home, as they brought me hither; though I was desirous rather to make an experiment of your mistress's friendship, than of the assistance of any other person."

Elizabeth was no sooner made aware of this determination, than she fitted out a fleet, and sent it to cruise in the Channel, ostensibly with a view to suppress piracy,—for the purpose, in reality, of intercepting the Scottish queen. That princess, however, made good her passage to Leith, where she was received with the greatest enthusiasm; and as she gave, or appeared to give, her full confidence to the heads of the Protestant party, affairs seemed for a while to wear a promising aspect. But the bigotry of the Scottish reformers was as wild as their manners were coarse and indelicate. The queen's maids, and a train of French nobility, who accompanied her to Scotland, soon found themselves so uncomfortable, that they returned home; and even Mary herself was denied the privilege which all her subjects claimed, of worshipping God unmolested, according to the rites of her religion. Never, indeed, has a cause, holy and just in itself, been more cruelly injured by the conduct of its supporters. The most innocent amusements were condemned—the

queen was everywhere spoken of as Jezebel—and the authority of the laws was made to yield to the violence of a wild fanaticism. Elizabeth saw, and rated at their just value, the difficulties by which her relative was beset. While, therefore, she strove by negotiation to obtain a ratification of the treaty of Edinburgh, yet refused to purchase that concession by the recognition of Mary as her successor, she prudently abstained from all interference with Scottish affairs, and devoted her energies to promote the re-establishment of public credit, and to enlarge both the resources and the military strength of her own kingdom.

Elizabeth was thus employed, when the breaking out, in 1562, of the great religious wars in France, induced her, for a time, to play a more important part on the stage of European politics. To the applications of the Prince of Condé and the other chiefs of the Protestants, she paid the more ready regard, in consequence of the decided part which Philip of Spain had taken against them; while the bribes with which they scrupled not to purchase her good-will, were, it must be confessed, sufficiently alluring. Neither the queen nor the people of England had as yet learned to contemplate the loss of Calais with any degree of philosophy. When, therefore, Condé undertook to put her in possession of Havre de Grace, a place still more important than that of which she lamented the capture, Elizabeth's scruples, if, indeed, she ever entertained such, gave way, and a corps of six thousand men was despatched, under able leaders, to support the rebellion, already at its height. The English troops behaved with their usual gallantry during the siege of Rouen, but could not hinder it from falling into the hands of Montmorency and the king of Navarre. Lord Warwick, the commander-in-chief, then concentrated in Havre, which, after clearing it of the great mass of

its inhabitants, he put in a position of defence, and prepared to maintain to the last extremity.

While France thus groaned in all her provinces under the miseries of civil strife, Elizabeth lay ill of the small-pox, a disease which proved in her case so virulent, that serious apprehensions were entertained for the result. She had hitherto declined all proposals of marriage, notwithstanding that among the suitors for her hand were numbered Philip of Spain, Charles of Austria, Eric, king of Sweden, and Adolphus, duke of Holstein. The young earl of Arran, likewise, in spite of the support of Cecil and his colleagues, had been rejected; and even lord Robert Dudley, though treated with something more than a becoming familiarity, found that the sudden death of his wife, the daughter and heiress of sir John Robsart, threw a dark shadow upon his private character, without advancing him nearer to a throne. The Commons, alarmed at the prospect of a disputed succession, again implored her to choose a husband, or, in the event of a continued predilection for a life of celibacy, to name her successor. But Elizabeth was deaf to their arguments: she would give no promise to marry; and as to determining, during her own life, between the rival houses of Scotland and Suffolk, she entertained opinions too just, touching the effects of such a procedure, to give to it one moment's serious consideration. The Parliament was, therefore, compelled to rest satisfied with such a reply as she chose to give. God, she said, when it should be his pleasure to remove her, would provide, without doubt, a fitting head to wear the crown; and in the mean time it was their duty to take care that the means of supporting the dignity of that crown should not be wanting.

Nothing offended by this procedure, the parliament not only granted supplies, but passed various acts, of

which it was the tendency more and more to confirm the queen's authority in things spiritual, and to strengthen the foundations of the reformed church. The convocation, also, which it may be remarked, once for all, consisted, like the parliament, of two houses, the bishops sitting in one, the deans and archdeacons, with two proctors, to represent the parochial clergy of each diocese, composing the other, was forward, by a grant of six shillings in the pound, to mark its loyalty and devotion. But the convocation did not meet for the single purpose of taxing the body which it represented. A revision of the Book of Common-Prayer took place; which rendered it what it now is, next to the Bible the purest and best of volumes; the canons were examined and adopted, and out of the forty-two articles, compiled in Edward's reign, thirty-nine were drawn up to be the future test of orthodoxy throughout England. To these, as well as to the oath of supremacy, all persons about to take holy orders were required to subscribe; though the latter alone was by law established as the qualification for a seat in the House of Commons, the situation of a schoolmaster, the right of practising as an attorney, or a private tutor, and an officer under the crown.

Jealous as she was of the honour of her crown, Elizabeth partook so little of the disposition of her father, that however full the exchequer might be, she never disbursed from it, even on necessary occasions, except with extreme reluctance. Even hatred of the house of Guise, one of the strongest passions in her nature, was not sufficient to overcome this feeling; and hence her subsidies to the Protestant party in France, of which she had become the acknowledged protector, were both few and inconsiderable. But a still more extraordinary fact is this, that in spite of her great anxiety to retain Havre, as the best security which she could have for the surrender of Calais, neither the entreaties of Cecil, nor the remonstrances of lord

Warwick, could prevail upon her to keep the place in a condition to withstand a siege. The magazines, both for arms and ammunition, were permitted to stand empty, and of intrenching-tools there was a total lack. The garrison, which consisted originally of four thousand men, being supplied neither with pay nor wholesome provisions, dwindled away, through sickness, to less than half its numbers. So long as the civil wars lasted, this unaccountable short-sightedness, however much it might deserve blame, was not productive of any immediate disaster. The papists were too busy in counteracting the devices of Condé, to find leisure for the reduction of a sea-port town, of which no other use was made by its conquerors than to send forth from it an occasional marauding expedition into the districts near. But Condé, though sincere in his attachment to the reformed faith, had never ceased to be at heart a Frenchman. He, therefore, gladly embraced, with most of the chiefs who served under him, the first favourable opportunity of effecting a reconciliation with their enemies; and Elizabeth's interests were, of course, readily sacrificed, in order to bring about that much-desired object. Of the restoration of Calais no mention was made in the treaty which allayed, for a time, religious discord in France. The English, on the contrary, were required to evacuate Havre, and when they refused to do so, the place was invested. Lord Warwick, enfeebled by the causes just explained, was in no condition to offer a stout resistance. He was compelled, after two breaches had been effected, to request terms, and surrendered the town, on condition of being permitted to remove with his troops to England.

Mortified as she was by this impotent conclusion of the French war, Elizabeth was yet too prudent to reject the overtures which were immediately made to her by the queen regent. She assented to a pacification, but reserved all the claims which the treaty of

Cateau Cambresis had established, and thus saved, as she imagined, her own honour, with reference to the recovery of Calais. Meanwhile, however, other and more direct causes of inquietude were beginning to operate. Notwithstanding the want of courtesy which had distinguished their early intercourse, there had sprung up, of late, an apparent cordiality between the queens of England and Scotland, which led to a frequent interchange of familiar letters, and an earnest desire, at least on one side, to avoid all causes of reasonable offence. Among other topics which she was in the habit of discussing with her cousin, Mary alluded more than once to her own marriage, representing it as a measure which her subjects were extremely desirous to promote, and to which she conceived that she was bound, by the peculiarity of her situation, to accede. Elizabeth not only offered no objection to the arrangement, but pretended highly to approve of it; yet with remarkable inconsistency, she threw cold water on every proposal as it came definitively before her. Don Carlos, the son of Philip of Spain, the kings of Sweden and Navarre, the archduke Charles, the duke of Ferrara, and the cardinal Bourbon, each of these was in his turn rejected at her suggestion; and when Mary pressed her to assign a reason, she stated without reserve, that an English alliance would best tally with the future hopes and reasonable expectations of her relative. Mary understood from this, that Elizabeth herself designed to recommend to her a husband. When, therefore, Dudley, now created earl of Leicester, was spoken of as a fitting match, she experienced less of surprise than of indignation; a feeling which it required all her prudence to conceal from the prying eye of the English ambassador. But there was no occasion either for indignation or alarm in this case. Elizabeth was too much pleased with the society of her favourite, to think seriously of wedding him to

another; and hence, so soon as Mary had expressed a willingness to comply with her wishes, the offer of Leicester's hand was withdrawn.

Mary was offended, not without cause, by such proceedings; but a sense of interest coming to the aid of a temper naturally placable, she soon renewed her friendly correspondence with the English queen. This was the more readily done, that a new match began to be considered; to which, as it presented numerous advantages to both princesses, both appeared, for a time, equally inclined. Henry Stuart, lord Darnley, the son of the earl of Lennox, by lady Margaret Douglas, the niece of Henry the Eighth, was at once cousin-german to the queen of Scots, and next after her in the line of succession to the English throne. He was, moreover, an English subject; for his father having been driven from Scotland during the regency of the duke of Chatelheraut, took refuge in London, where he was well received by Henry, and enriched with large possessions. As Mary had anticipated, Elizabeth, when consulted respecting the eligibility of this match, professed cordially to approve of it. She granted permission to Lennox and his son to visit the Scottish capital, and Darnley being in the prime of youth, and endowed with a singularly handsome exterior, the affections of Mary were at once enlisted on the side of what she believed to be her duty. But Darnley had many enemies both in Scotland and in England. The Hamiltons hated him, because of the feud which existed between his family and theirs; Mary's natural brother, now earl of Murray, beheld him with distaste, as the probable destroyer of his own influence at court; and the zealous reformers condemned him as a favourer of the ancient superstitions. All these secretly poured their complaints into the ear of Elizabeth; and she, with her accustomed policy, no sooner found that the marriage was agreed upon, than she protested against it. But

the protest came, on this occasion, too late. Mary wedded her handsome and accomplished, but weak and wayward, relative; and laid the foundation of troubles in which she continued, throughout the whole of her future life, to be involved.

While the union was yet pending, Murray and his associates had opened a negotiation with Elizabeth, and receiving assurances of support, in case of need, resolved to hinder its accomplishment at all hazards. With this view they made an attempt to seize Mary and her obnoxious lover, during a journey from Perth to Callendar. Their design had, however, been discovered, and the royal pair, hastening their march a few hours, escaped uninjured. Nothing disheartened by this failure the conspirators entered into a new bond, and were encouraged to act up to its tenour by a fresh assurance of support from England. Mary, however, as has been stated, gave her hand to Darnley; and followed up the measure by assembling an armed force, and otherwise preparing to meet the dangers with which she was menaced. It was little to the credit of Elizabeth, that under such circumstances she should have supplied Murray and his friends with the means of equipping troops, and permitted her ambassador to intrigue, as he did with unblushing effrontery, whenever there appeared a chance of adding to the number of the malecontents. Yet, on this occasion, neither the gold nor the diplomatic skill of the English availed. Mary took the field, drove the insurgents from point to point, and compelled them at last to take refuge beyond the Tweed, where the treatment which awaited them accorded not less with the genius of their patroness, than with their own deserts. Elizabeth disavowed all connexion with them, forced them to corroborate her assertion in the presence of the French and Spanish ambassadors, and sent them to subsist upon a scanty pension in the town of Berwick. There they remained,

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neglected by the court of London, and little regarded by their friends at home, till by the most abject submission, and repeated promises of good behaviour in all time coming, they prevailed upon their sovereign to treat with them respecting a pardon. But ere the pardon was actually made out, a messenger arrived from France, with a strong protest on the part of the cardinal Lorraine; and the conspirators, who were preparing to return home, under the idea that the storm had blown over, found themselves suddenly exposed to its fury, and as suddenly delivered.

Allusion was made, some time ago, to the measures projected by the Popish sovereigns of Europe, with the view of stifling, wherever their influence might extend, the spirit of inquiry, and restoring the authority of worn-out prejudices in favour of the supremacy of the Roman see. The death of Mary of England checked for a moment the ardour of these potentates; and the subsequent revolt of Condé and his friends compelled them to change their policy. But peace was no sooner restored in France, than their schemes were resumed, which included, among other purposes, the universal establishment of the Inquisition, and the massacre, should less decided measures fail, of all persons professing the reformed opinions. Mary, queen of Scots, if she assented not to the last of these designs, had, nevertheless, grossly committed herself, by addressing a letter to the council of Trent, in which she avowed her determination to promote the integrity of the Catholic religion, not only in Scotland, but in England. Her zeal was highly applauded by the princes of the house of Lorraine, who hastened to point out that she could not more effectually promote the good cause, than by crushing by a single blow, as it was now competent for her to do, the leaders of the congregation. Mary had determined to follow a milder, and perhaps a more judicious course, but permitted the suggestions of her

relatives to overcome her own better resolutions. Instead of filling up the pardons which Murray and his associates had been led to expect, she called a parliament together, for the purpose of obtaining against them sentence of attainder.

Of the guilt of the parties thus put upon their trial no doubt could exist, and their condemnation was contemplated as inevitable, when certain transactions took place, which caused both their crime and its probable consequences to be forgotten. The queen had not been long united to Darnley, ere the distressing truth was forced upon her conviction, that she had given her hand to one every way unworthy of the honour. Darnley was not merely a weak man: he was violent, low-minded, and debauched; destitute of all gratitude, and the tool of flatterers. Addicted to the meanest vices, he did not scruple to insult the queen in all companies, more especially after she began to discover an inclination to refuse him the great object of his ambition, an equal participation in regal power. After enduring these insults longer than could have been expected, Mary withdrew herself from his society, and he fell, as a necessary consequence, into the contempt which his natural imbecility merited. Like other weak men, Darnley, however, attributed his wife's estrangement, not to his own demerits, but to a criminal passion on her part for another. There was about the court one David Rizzio, or Riccio, a Piedmontese by birth, a man of humble origin, but endowed with various accomplishments, a scholar, a musician, and well skilled in the business of diplomacy. Him Mary employed as her foreign secretary, and of him Darnley became jealous. He found willing listeners among the turbulent and illiterate nobles, whose rude manners and uncultivated understandings induced the queen to pass them by in the distribution of her favours; and a con-

at large, how cordially she despised him. No reference was made to him, when, at the suggestion of the English and French ambassadors, the murderers of Rizzio received a pardon, and were permitted to return home. In like manner he was not consulted in the formation of a new cabinet, in which his personal enemies, the earls of Murray, of Bothwell, and of Huntley, obtained seats; and when he ventured to complain of the withdrawal of all power and influence from his hands, he was reminded that he never employed either except to work injury to the queen. A series of plots and devices,—of open quarrels and reconciliations followed, of which, as they bore but little upon the existing relations between the two countries, it is unnecessary to give an account. These, again, led to a proposition, on the part of the cabinet, to effect a divorce, which was followed up, on Mary's refusal to entertain the idea, by a still more iniquitous arrangement. It had been said that Darnley was in the habit of uttering frequent threats against the lives of Murray, Huntley, and Bothwell. This might or might not be true; but there is no doubt that a counter-plot was devised by these noblemen and their dependants, to remove so obnoxious an individual, at all hazards, out of the way. That Mary herself was privy to this horrid scheme no proof has ever been adduced, though she, unquestionably, became its victim both in her moral character and in the misfortunes which overtook her person.

When the quarrel was at the highest, Darnley became infected with the small-pox, and Mary hastened to visit him in Glasgow. A reconciliation was the consequence of this step; and Darnley, being removed to Edinburgh, was lodged, for quiet and fresh air, in a religious house called the Kirk of Field, just within the walls of the city. Early in the morning of the 10th of February, long before it was day, a tremendous explosion roused the inhabitants of Edinburgh; and it

appeared, on inquiry, that the Kirk of Field had been destroyed by gunpowder. Of Darnley himself, the remains were found in an orchard hard by, with the corpse of his chambergroom lying near him; both of them unscathed by fire. But as there were no marks of violence about them, it is reasonable to conclude that they perished in the concussion, though the furniture of the beds may have saved their skin from the influence of the flame, and their limbs from fracture.

The murder of Darnley was attributed, as if by common consent, to the earl of Bothwell. Voices were heard in the streets by night, and placards were posted on the walls of the houses during the day, all of which accused him of the crime; while Lennox, the father of Darnley, not only lodged a complaint against him, but conjured Mary to bring him to trial with as much speed as might be consistent with the ends of justice. The queen, who had long treated Bothwell with something more than a discreet familiarity, gave instructions that he should be brought to trial. Unfortunately, however, for her own fair fame, she took care, by hastening the day, and conniving at the attendance of Bothwell's armed retainers, to place Lennox in a situation which virtually precluded him from making his appearance in court; and Bothwell, after waiting at the bar for an accuser, who came not, was, as a matter of course, acquitted. But this ambitious man was not content to stop here. He had already prevailed upon a large body of nobles to recommend him, in the event of Darnley's divorce or dissolution, as a fit person to supply his place; and though himself a married man, he now devised, and carried into execution, a daring enterprise with reference to that consummation. Having repudiated his wife, a daughter of the earl of Huntley, Bothwell intercepted the queen, while passing with a slender escort from Stirling to Edinburgh. He

bore her away to the castle of Dunbar, of which he was the governor, and there offered to her the last injury which it was in his power to inflict. Now then, the people expected that she would pour out the vials of her wrath upon one who had so grievously offended; but they were mistaken. She permitted him to conduct her to the capital; created him, on the 12th of May, duke of Orkney; and, on the 15th, filled up the amount of her indiscretion, by accepting him as a husband.

If Mary had hitherto been enabled to hold up against the deep-rooted hostility of the leaders of the Congregation, she owed her success to the attachment of the great body of the people; whom the extreme beauty of her person, and the unaffected gentleness of her demeanour, induced to forget that she was a Papist. Her recent conduct, however, furnished a handle to Knox and his brethren, of which they hastened to make use. She was accused of being a party to the assassination of Darnley; and the haste with which she had given her hand to one whom public opinion every where condemned, afforded but too much appearance of truth to the charge. An association was accordingly entered into under the auspices of Morton, Maitland, and others, all of whom were afterwards proved to have been consenting to Darnley's death; and, troops being enrolled, the conspirators marched, as they declared, to revenge the wrongs put upon the nation at large. In an evil hour, Mary and Bothwell, who had taken refuge in Dunbar, marched out to oppose the rebels. Bothwell, after a few empty bravadoes, quitted the field and fled to Denmark; while Mary, seeing her troops desert by whole companies, gave herself up into the hands of the conspirators, on a general assurance of good treatment. She was led, forthwith, in a sort of triumph to Edinburgh; where, after enduring many insults from the populace,

which her conquerors scarcely sought to restrain, she found herself a prisoner in the provost's house. But the conspirators could not consider her safe even here. On the following day, they despatched her to a castelated mansion, on an island in Lochleven, where, with the mother of the earl of Murray as her gaoler, who claimed to be the lawful wife of James the Fifth, she found reason to complain of even more than the ordinary sufferings of a captive.

Of all these proceedings Elizabeth was made regularly aware; and she had more than once remonstrated against some of the imprudences of which Mary was preparing to be guilty. She now seemed to have forgotten, in the contemplation of the sufferings of a sister queen, and of the evil consequences which successful rebellion was calculated to produce elsewhere, the jealousies and heartburnings of which she had hitherto been the victim. Her ambassador received instructions to interest himself in Mary's cause, and to demand that she should be restored, under proper restrictions, to the exercise of her authority. He was authorized, likewise, to obtain from her the pardon of all her enemies, and to secure the removal of the young prince to England, where he might be educated under the eye of Elizabeth herself. But Throgmorton (he was Elizabeth's envoy on this occasion) permitted himself, perhaps willingly, to be cajoled. The malecontents never designed to seat Mary again upon the throne. They had already recalled Murray from France, whither, at the beginning of the troubles, he had retired; and they soon compelled their unfortunate queen to sign two deeds; by one of which she relinquished the throne in favour of her son; while, by the other, she constituted her brother regent. Yet even this sufficed not to appease the fury, or allay the fear of the conspirators. Mary was doomed to perpetual imprisonment; and the prince, then thirteen months old,

having been crowned at Stirling, Murray entered, without scruple, on the duties of his new office.

Against these bold proceedings Elizabeth entered a public protest. She would neither permit her ambassador to be present at the coronation of the infant king, nor acknowledge Murray as regent: yet she sanctioned, with unbecoming inconsistency, his continued residence in the Scottish capital, and offered no interruption to the correspondence which Cecil maintained, throughout, with the heads of the insurrection. The truth, indeed, is, that both Elizabeth and her minister had views of their own, which, through good report and evil report, they prosecuted with the most unscrupulous perseverance. They desired nothing more, in all their intercourse with Scotland, than to establish an absolute dependence of the lesser on the greater country; and events were already in progress, which enabled them to accomplish that design, by means, of which, in a moral point of view, it is impossible to speak except with abhorrence.

Mary had languished in prison several months, during which the regent had twice visited her, when her beauty, and the contemplation of her misfortunes, so wrought upon George Douglas, the brother of her keeper, that he determined to risk every thing for her deliverance. He managed the affair with equal address and good fortune, and the queen being conveyed to the castle of Niddry, in the Lothians, there erected her standard. She was immediately joined by a numerous body of nobles and their retainers, at the head of whom, amounting to six thousand, she took the road to Dumbarton, with the intention of abiding there till she should be able to compromise her quarrel with Murray and his friends, towards whom her feelings appear to have been the reverse of vindictive. But a more unhappy fate awaited her. At a place, called Langside, not far from Glasgow, the regent met her with

a force inferior, indeed, in point of numbers, but far more formidable by reason of its discipline; and, on the 13th of May, 1568, her party sustained a signal defeat, from which it never afterwards recovered. The queen herself fled, with all haste, towards the south. She stopped that night at the abbey of Dundrennan, full sixty miles distant from the field of battle, and, crossing the Solway Frith, on the following morning, in a fishing-boat, landed, with a small retinue, in the harbour of Workington, whence she proceeded through Cockermouth to Carlisle.

Mary took this rash step against the advice and entreaties of her most attached followers. From the agents of Elizabeth she had received, ever since her escape, the most friendly assurances of support: she could not, therefore, doubt that at least an asylum would be afforded in her distress; and she despatched with confidence a messenger to London, whom she instructed to lay a statement of her case before the English queen, and to solicit an interview. But, in counting upon the continued friendship of her relative, she forgot that Elizabeth was surrounded by counsellors more apt to try all questions, both of foreign and domestic policy, by the test of expediency than by those of generosity, or even of good faith. Cecil pointed out to his mistress that she could not, consistently with what was due to her own character, receive, as her guest, a woman charged with offences so numerous and so deadly as those of which Mary stood accused. He expatiated on the impolicy of breaking with the Protestants of Scotland, whose views corresponded, in all respects, with her own; more especially, when, in doing so, it would be necessary to espouse the cause of a Papist, and a pretender to the English throne. By pressing these points, and exciting the queen's fears of a confederacy among both Scottish and English Romanists against the religion and government of the country, he suc-

ceeded in stifling the better feelings which worked in his mistress' bosom; and Mary was told, that till she should have cleared herself of the heavy charges that were brought against her, an admission at the court of London could not be conceded.

Mary complained of this usage, and refused to plead as she was required, like an accused vassal at the bar of a superior. Elizabeth was in consequence compelled to vary her mode of acting; and the queen of Scots having vainly besought permission to quit the realm, was transferred as a prisoner from Carlisle to Bolton Castle. Here the subtlety of Cecil suggested an expedient which sufficiently served his purpose. It was proposed, not that Mary herself, but that her enemies, should be put upon their trial; that if they could justify their behaviour to the satisfaction of certain English commissioners, they should be allowed to retain their estates and honours; and that if they failed in this respect they should be given over to the justice of their sovereign. Mary gave to this proposition a reluctant assent; Murray did not presume to resist it; and the city of York was chosen as a convenient place at which to hold the conference.

Early in October, 1568, the conference began; the duke of Norfolk, the earl of Essex, and sir Ralph Sadler, the confidant of Cecil, acting as commissioners. The queen of Scots was represented by Lesley, bishop of Ross, the lords Livingstone, Boyd, Herries, and three others. For the opposite party, Murray attended in person, together with Morton, Lindsay, the bishop of Orkney, the abbot of Dunfermline, Maitland, and five other counsellors. The first address of the English commissioners ought to have satisfied all present, that no real benefit was intended for their country; while at the same time it indicated plainly enough the designs both of Elizabeth and her minister. "You have come hither," said Sadler, "to submit the differences which

divide the kingdom of Scotland to the queen of England, and, therefore, I first pray of you to pay her grace the homage due to her." Murray made no reply, but blushed deeply. Maitland, however, fired with a just sense of what was due to his country, exclaimed, "When Elizabeth restores to Scotland the earldom of Huntingdon, with Cumberland and Westmoreland, then will we do homage for these territories, as was done by the ancient sovereigns of Scotland, who enjoyed them. As to the crown and kingdom of Scotland they are more free than those of England, which lately paid Peter-pence to Rome." The question of English supremacy was then waved; and the business of the conference went forward.

While the trial, if such it may be termed, continued to be carried on at York, Mary stood forward as the accuser; and Murray, with his confederates, took the ground of defendants. Both parties, however, exhibited considerable distrust, as well of the good faith as of the authority of the judges; for Mary demanded more than once, that in the powers given to the commissioners, the promise of the English queen to replace her on her throne should appear; while Murray required a confirmation of the assurance which he had already received, that in the event of conviction she should never return to Scotland. The immediate consequence of Murray's misgiving, whether real or pretended, was to afford to Mary a decided advantage in the controversy. She accused him of rebellion, of countenancing the imprisonment of his sovereign, and, finally, of compelling her, by threats of violence, to abdicate; while his answers went no further than to explain, that these proceedings, however criminal in the abstract, were but measures of defence against Bothwell, of whom she had become the tool. But Murray, secure of a ready ally in Cecil, even if he should be deserted by Elizabeth, was playing on the

whole a deeper game than met the public eye. He had obtained possession of certain letters,—whether genuine, or forged, remains to this hour a problem unsolved,—in which Mary was made to appear in the blackest light; not only as an adulteress, but as a party consenting to the murder of the unfortunate earl of Darnley. These, though he abstained from producing them in open court, he exhibited in private to the commissioners; and accompanied the communication with a statement, that it would be impossible for him to bring forward all his proofs, unless assured, that a sentence of guilty against the queen would for ever exclude her from the throne. Nor did his double-dealing end here. While the commissioners paused in the investigation, till they should receive further instructions from London, Murray endeavoured to alarm the queen into one of two measures. He offered, through his secretary, Maitland, to give up the proofs of her guilt, to declare her innocent by act of parliament, and to secure her an ample revenue, on condition, that she should either confirm her resignation of the crown, as it had been executed at Lochleven, or else that, retaining the name of queen, she would consent to reside in England, and leave to him the title and authority of regent. To these proposals Mary turned a deaf ear. She had good reason to believe that her party in Scotland was becoming every day more respectable, and she would not, by an act of pusillanimity, betray both them and her own character.

Of the state of the conference at York, as well as of the intrigues and plots connected with it, one of which had for its object a marriage between Mary and the duke of Norfolk, Cecil and his colleagues in office were made regularly aware. That they distrusted the validity of Murray's proofs is, indeed, very evident; nevertheless, as their sole object throughout the proceeding was to render Mary innocuous, either by disgracing her

before Europe as convicted of murder, or by replacing her on the throne, under such restraints as should render Elizabeth the real sovereign of Scotland, they determined to press the inquiry after a manner which should make them masters of her fate. With this view, the commission received instructions to transfer its sittings to Westminster. Mary was surprised, and her surprise became alarm, when she found not only that new matter of accusation was brought forward, but that while Murray, her accuser, was permitted personally to support his charges, the same prohibition which at first shut her out of court was continued. It is not necessary to describe at length the scenes which followed. Murray now adduced his papers, which were pronounced by the queen's agents to be forgeries; while they, in their turn, accused the regent of being himself a party to Darnley's murder. But the result of the inquiry is not a little curious. After five months had been devoted to the business of the investigation, the contending parties were informed, that as the queen of England saw nothing on the one hand which induced her to doubt the honour of the earl of Murray, so on the other, she could discover no proofs of the criminal charges which he had brought against his sovereign. She was, therefore, determined to leave the affairs of Scotland as she had found them. Now had the spirit of this declaration been adhered to, Mary, not less than her accusers, would have been set at liberty; but this would have ill answered the purposes of Elizabeth. While Murray was permitted to return home, after being presented with a large sum of money, the price, perhaps, of treason, though given as a compensation for travelling expenses, Mary became more decidedly than ever a prisoner in the hands of her rival. She was removed from Bolton Castle, a place surrounded with Roman Catholics, and therefore, in the estimation of Cecil, insecure, and conveyed to Tutbury, in the

county of Stafford, where she was put under the custody of the earl of Shrewsbury.

I have alluded to the proposed marriage of the Scottish queen with the duke of Norfolk. Strange to say, the regent, Murray, was an advocate of that measure: indeed, it was his friend Maitland who first opened the subject to Mary, stipulating, however, that she should in the first place ratify the abdication, as it had been settled in the castle of Lochleven. Norfolk was soon made aware, by the altered manners of his mistress, that she too was privy to the negotiation. He hastened to assure her, that to him the scheme was throughout distasteful; yet he consented, not long afterwards, to re-open the treaty, Wood, the regent's secretary, taking an active part in the business. To Mary herself almost any device appeared admissible, which promised only to ensure her escape from captivity. She consented, therefore, to purchase the wished-for deliverance, by giving her hand to Norfolk; and as Bothwell, from his retreat in Denmark, signified his consent to a divorce, and Lumley, Arundel, Pembroke, and many other nobles, approved of it, there seemed to be at one time more than a reasonable prospect that the adventure would end to the satisfaction of all concerned. These prospects the treachery of Murray effectually obscured. He never desired the liberation of his sister; he could not disguise the state of his feelings from Maitland; and when the latter exhibited a disinclination to go along with him, Murray treated him as an enemy. Finally, he communicated to Elizabeth the plans of Norfolk and his friends, upon which the duke was immediately arrested, and thrown into the Tower.

In justice to the duke of Norfolk, and to others of the English nobles, who joined him in the plan for effecting the liberation of Mary, it is necessary to state, that one of the most prominent of the articles to which

they subscribed, implied that the consent of Elizabeth should first of all be obtained. Doubtless they took their measures with a view to render the denial of such consent extremely difficult, if not impossible; for besides that a powerful party was engaged to support them within the realm,—the kings of France and Spain, and even the Pope, were in their confidence. But there were other persons of rank and of influence who, equally with Norfolk, desired to see the queen of Scots at liberty; partly, perhaps, from motives of compassion and gallantry, partly because they looked upon her as the head of the Roman Catholics of Britain. These had already made a tender of their services to the captive princess; and now that her hopes, from the exertions of Norfolk, were blighted, she called upon them to make good their profession. In an evil hour for themselves, the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, with other popish gentlemen of the north, raised the standard of revolt, under the pretext of re-establishing the religion of their ancestors, and ridding the queen of her evil counsellors. They were overthrown almost without a struggle, and the common people returning to their homes, the leaders fled into Scotland, where Northumberland was committed by the regent a prisoner to the castle of Lochleven, while Westmoreland found shelter and honourable entertainment at the hands of the great border families of Scot and Ker.

Neither this ill-judged movement, nor one equally rash and unfortunate, in which Leonard Dacres, of the noble family of Gilsland, almost immediately afterwards took the lead, served in any degree to change the policy of Elizabeth's government, or to soften the rigorous captivity in which she held the queen of Scots. They proved to her, indeed, that in seizing the person of her rival, she had committed an act at least as pregnant with danger as its opposite; and if we may credit

the traditions of certain Scottish chroniclers, they induced her to treat with Murray touching the surrender of his ill-fated sister into the power of her enemies. But this treaty, if negotiated at all, of which, considered in its worst light, the proofs are extremely slender, as well as another and a better authenticated arrangement, was brought to an unlooked for conclusion. The regent, while riding through Linlithgow, was shot dead from a window, in revenge of a private injury, by a gentleman of the name of Hamilton; and Scotland presented for awhile one wide arena for civil strife, in which the forces of England were not always withheld from taking a part.

While such was the state of Great Britain, and such the relative situation of its sovereigns, the continent of Europe was again convulsed by a renewal, on a more extended scale than ever, of the religious wars both in France and the Low Countries. The league formed at Bayonne, in 1566, for the extermination of the Protestants, had not been concluded so secretly but that intelligence of what was going forward had reached Condé, Coligni, and other leaders of the Huguenots. They sent secretly to their adherents in every quarter a recommendation to stand upon the defensive, while they themselves resolved to prevent the destruction with which they were threatened, by striking an important blow, ere the enemy should be prepared for it. How far Elizabeth, or her ambassador Norris, was cognizant of this design, I take it not upon me to determine. That she ceased not, even during the most peaceful seasons, to hold confidential communication with the heads of that great European party which looked up to her as a protector, cannot be doubted; but that she was consulted, far more, that she gave her consent to the attempted seizure of Charles and his mother at Monceaux, has not been proved. Be that, however, as it may, the struggle no sooner began than she renewed the cautious but efficient aid which she had afforded to

the insurgents on previous occasions. No formal interruption of amity between the nations occurred, but while money was disbursed with a free hand, volunteers were permitted to pass over, and Englishmen fought, though not under English colours, by the side of Condé and Coligni. It was in this school that Sir Walter Raleigh, afterwards so distinguished in the annals of military enterprise, first studied the art of war; being one of a regiment of young gentlemen, whom Henry Champernon was permitted to enrol in London, and to carry with him to the Continent.

Meantime the gallant prince of Orange, who had meditated the design from the moment that an accident disclosed to him the projected forcible conversion of his countrymen, raised the standard both of religious and civil liberty in the Low Countries. To him, even more undisguisedly than to the prince of Condé, Elizabeth gave her countenance. Not only were troops raised for his service, and money advanced to fill his military chest, but a still more decided method was adopted of crippling the resources of the enemy to whom he was opposed. It chanced that five vessels, laden with treasure, which a company of Italian bankers had advanced for the payment of the duke of Alva's army, were forced to take shelter in Plymouth and Southampton, against the threatened attack of certain Huguenot privateers. Elizabeth could not be ignorant either of the destination of the money, or of the peculiar circumstances under which it had been sent to sea; yet affecting to believe that it was still the property of the bankers, and that they were seeking to dispose of it to the best advantage, she seized it without scruple, and transferred it to her own exchequer. It was to no purpose that Philip remonstrated, or that Alva sought to avenge the insult, by sequestrating the property of every English merchant over whom his authority extended. Elizabeth noticed the latter act only

by committing reprisals, while the former she did not permit to interrupt the apparent good understanding between Spain and England.

The civil war continued to rage in France till the year 1570, when an accommodation was effected: the contest in the Low Countries scarcely endured so long. William of Nassau, unable to make head against the skill of Alva and the discipline of the Spanish troops, took refuge in Germany, whence he watched the progress of events, with the design of being guided by the turn which they might take. Meanwhile Elizabeth was rendered more uncomfortable than the occasion required, by the boldness with which the Pope, Pius the Fifth, pronounced her excommunication. Aware of the discontent of the popish party at home, and conscious that her treatment of the queen of Scots had not weakened its influence, she could not contemplate without dismay the possible formation of a league among the foreign powers to effect her overthrow. But Elizabeth forgot, in these calculations, that there were strong reasons at work, why the king of France, at least, should not desire to alter the balance of power in Europe. To overthrow her would be to set up Mary, queen of Scots,—no longer connected by ties of lineage with the reigning family; and if England alone had been hitherto capable of holding France in check, it would have ill answered the purposes of the French government to enlarge the resources of that rival, by giving her Scotland as an appanage. Still, circumstanced as Elizabeth was, it is very little to be wondered at if she experienced some alarm. A man named Felton had been bold enough to affix the Pope's bull to the gates of the bishop of London's palace. He suffered death for the offence, it is true, but as the blood of the martyrs was found to be the seed of the church, so the example set, even by Felton, might produce imitators. The queen made haste, as far as her power

extended, to narrow the probability. She caused her parliament to pass an act, which subjected to the pains of high-treason all persons found aiding in the publication of a Pope's bull, as well as those who should presume, during the queen's life, to speak of any one, except the natural issue of her body, as her heir. This she followed up by a statute, directed against the Puritans,—a body who began already to bestir themselves both in the House of Commons and elsewhere, and who, conceiving that the Church of England had not sufficiently separated from the customs of the Church of Rome, waged war against the establishment, not only upon questions of church government and discipline, but upon such minor points as the dresses of the clergy and the use of the ring in marriage. Thus the queen's subjects were required to frequent public worship in the parish churches, under a penalty of one shilling for each omission; while by all clergymen, as well as such laymen as accepted office under the crown, or were elected to serve in parliament, the oath of supremacy, not less than that of allegiance, was required to be taken.

If the queen experienced much anxiety when contemplating the general aspect of affairs, her feelings were strained to the uttermost, both by the council and the parliament, who again endeavoured to bring about a marriage as the best means that could be adopted of dispelling the threatened dangers. For a time it seemed as if she would consent to a union with the young duke of Anjou; but as she was probably never sincere in the matter, so she gladly took advantage of a difference on the score of religion to break off the negotiation. Meanwhile, however, the discontents of which both she and her cabinet were aware, rapidly matured themselves. The Papists, alike indignant at the late statute, and encouraged by the Pope's bull, began again to plot. The duke of Norfolk, forgetful of the promises which obtained his release from the Tower, renewed his intimacy with the royal captive; and became, at

last, so infatuated, as to arrange with the duke of Alva, a plan of foreign invasion. The treachery of one of Norfolk's servants, whom he employed in a confidential message to the Scottish lord Herries, betrayed this plot when almost ripe for execution. Norfolk was immediately arrested. He was put upon his trial, found guilty by a jury of his peers, and, after some delay, executed. But the House of Commons, at whose urgent entreaty the sentence had been carried into effect, were not content to stop there. They demanded that Mary herself should be put to death, not only as the instigator of all the seditious movements that had taken place, but as the enemy of true religion, and the accursed of God. Elizabeth was not yet prepared for such a step; she entertained very little esteem for the party which urged it; and finding that, in spite of her recommendations to the contrary, they persisted in agitating the question, she suddenly prorogued the parliament.

All this while the affairs of Scotland were conducted in a manner as little creditable to the national character as it was conducive to the interests of Elizabeth. The queen's nobles, as the adherents of Mary were termed, gradually lost ground; till in the end, Morton, her implacable enemy, became regent; and he, who had already sold the earl of Northumberland to execution, proved in every other respect the tool of Elizabeth. In France, on the other hand, events befell calculated to renew in no ordinary degree the anxieties of the queen and of her council. On the 28th of August, 1572, that atrocious crime was committed which will for ever be recorded in history as the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Upwards of ten thousand Protestants, among whom were included some hundreds of the principal nobility, perished by the hands of assassins, in Paris alone; while in all the cities and provinces murder seemed to be let loose, of which the devoted Huguenots were the victims. But the mon-

strous scheme, though long and cautiously matured, failed to produce the results anticipated from it. All the leaders of the Reformation had not fallen; and those who survived ran to arms, not only with a view to avenge the slaughter of their friends, but as the best means of averting a similar fate from themselves. Again was Elizabeth applied to for support, and again she pursued the line of cautious policy which appeared best calculated to advance her own interests. While she affected to believe the explanation offered by the king, and maintained the outward forms of amity with his court, she neither refused to supply, as far as circumstances would allow, the pecuniary demands of the Huguenots, nor hesitated to connive at the still more effective aid which numbers of her subjects afforded. Beyond this, however, she would not be persuaded to go; insomuch, that the noblemen and gentlemen of England, who, in their zeal for the Protestant cause, undertook to raise and maintain, at their private expense, an army of five-and-twenty thousand men, were peremptorily forbidden to take part in the quarrel, except as individual volunteers.

The massacre of St. Barthomew was not the isolated deed of a single tyrant. It formed part of a mighty conspiracy for the universal suppression of Protestantism; and Philip of Spain, the acknowledged protector of the league, was not slow in following it up in the Low Countries. But the men of Holland and Zealand were composed of materials on which it was by no means prudent to try experiments. They rose upon their oppressors; and calling to their aid the prince of Orange, waged a long and fierce war with the whole power of Spain. Other provinces, fired by their example, flew to arms, till the whole of the Netherlands became united; when a solemn offer of the sovereignty was made to Elizabeth, on the single condition, that she would aid them in casting aside a

yoke which they abhorred. At first the queen of England had cautiously abstained from taking any part in this quarrel. She was both unwilling to provoke the hostility of Philip, and incredulous of the perseverance and resources of the Dutch; nor could all the arguments of the prince of Orange induce her to undertake more than was consistent with the character of a friend to both parties. When, however, she beheld the provinces united, and found that Philip continued deaf to her remonstrances; when, after the resignation of Alva, and the death of Requesens, duke John of Austria was appealed to, to conduct the war, Elizabeth, who contemplated in the last-named chief only an aspirant to the hand of the queen of Scots, and, as a necessary consequence, to the throne of England, laid all hesitation aside. The sovereignty she still declined; but, besides supplying the Flemings with money, she sent an army of five thousand men to their aid, which, under various leaders, performed useful service. Yet it would be unjust to attribute to mere womanish caprice a measure which originated in the soundest views of English policy. Had Elizabeth persisted in maintaining a strict neutrality, the Flemings were prepared to transfer to France the offers which she had rejected; offers which, as she well knew, France would not have been induced to evade by any considerations of good faith towards an ally, or of honour in the maintenance of treaties. It was to prevent this union,—a union pregnant with the worst consequences to England,—that Elizabeth acceded to the wishes of the Stadtholder, and lent that aid to the gallant and suffering Flemings which enabled them, in the end, to work out their own deliverance.

While the other nations of Europe were thus convulsed in all their provinces, England continued to enjoy a profound tranquillity; the effects of the prudence and vigour which characterized the queen's

government, and of the wise precautions which she employed in all her measures. Neither the renewal of anarchy in Scotland, which followed the resignation of the regency by Morton, nor the frequent insurrections in Ireland,—of which notice will be taken by and by,—sufficed in any serious degree to interrupt a state of things, which, happily for those who lived under it, affords but few materials to the historian. It is true, that plots connected with the Pope's bull were, from time to time, arranged; in which, not only the liberation of Mary, but the death of Elizabeth, was compassed; but these, a system of police not overscrupulous in its mode of proceeding, enabled the authorities continually to detect, while the punishments inflicted on the parties concerned were terrible. The Puritans also, by this time a growing party, as well as the Anabaptists, and other sectarians, displayed an outward spirit of restlessness, which it was esteemed necessary to curb. Nevertheless, the peace of the realm was in no instance seriously broken, nor were the people at large ever in the enjoyment of a greater share of happiness or contentment. Provisions of all kind were abundant and cheap; a spirit of commercial enterprise was fostered, and a race of hardy mariners, by adventuring into unknown seas, at once advanced the reputation and increased the wealth of their country. No doubt the parliaments were servile, and the queen imperious, perhaps despotic. The church, too, when tried by the standard of more modern opinions, was open to some reproach, by reason of the severity with which the powers of the High-Commission Court were wielded. But we must not forget, that civil liberty, in the sense now applied to the term, was then unknown; and that, on questions affecting religion, toleration would have been accounted a sin. When, therefore, I speak of the English as a happy people, who lived under wise laws wisely administered, I use the expression

in the only sense in which it ever can, or at least ought to be used. They were the best governed of any nation in Europe. They possessed all the freedom both of action and thought which corresponded with their own notions of right; and had more been given to them, they would doubtless have done, as their descendants did a few years later,—they would have grievously abused it to their own injury.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUKE OF ANJOU.—BABINGTON'S CONSPIRACY.—TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.—THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA.—EXPLOITS OF ENGLISH SAILORS AND SOLDIERS.—LORD ESSEX.—IRISH AFFAIRS.—THE EXECUTION OF ESSEX.—THE QUEEN'S DEATH.—HER CHARACTER.—MISCELLANEOUS TRANSACTIONS.

[A. D. 1579 to A. D. 1603.]

AMONG the few incidents of public importance which occurred during an interval of some years, an abortive endeavour on the part of the duke of Anjou to contract a marriage with Elizabeth seems to require notice. The negotiation began soon after Elizabeth's rejection of the Belgian crown, and was conducted, on the part of the queen, with all the childishness and absurd coquetry which distinguished her in the management of such affairs. But the match was not, from the first, agreeable to the council; and, as the prospect of its completion was seen greatly to elate the popish faction, she was, though with extreme reluctance, persuaded to break it off. How far this circumstance may have wrought upon the despair of the Papists, more especially when the death of Anjou brought Henry of Navarre, an avowed Protestant, next in succession to the French throne, it is not worth while to inquire. Be that, however, as it may, from the moment of Elizabeth's return to the policy of which Burleigh was presumed to be the advocate, they became more and more busy, as well as more and more reckless. At Douay, in Spanish Flanders, and at Rome, colleges had been opened for the education of persons designed for the popish priesthood in England. These now sent forth whole swarms of intriguers, who, strong in the power

of bigotry, sowed, wherever they went, the seeds of disaffection to the government. To meet their exertions laws more and more severe were enacted. It was pronounced treason, and punishable as such, not only to seek the queen's deposition, but to be the party in favour of whom any such movement should be attempted; a statute, which those who promoted it took no trouble to conceal, was aimed chiefly against the life of the unfortunate Mary. Thus, during some years, was a war of plots on the one side, and of penal enactments on the other, carried on; to which too many, of whose guilty intentions the proofs are far from glaring, became victims.

Time passed, and the Flemish war, into which England had entered at first reluctantly, became, by degrees, the great school of military conduct to the most illustrious of her sons. Norris, the earl of Leicester, the lord Willoughby, sir Francis de Vere, and sir Philip Sidney*, all served in that contest, and, if we except lord Leicester, all contributed to advance the glory of their country's arms, and their own reputation. Drake, too, the hardy circumnavigator of the globe, conducted a formidable expedition into the West India seas; and sorely harassed the Spaniards in that quarter of their extensive empire, where they were accustomed to regard themselves as most secure. Meanwhile Elizabeth, though successful in all her foreign undertakings, was kept in a state of perpetual uneasiness at home, by reason of conspiracies, which followed upon one another with increasing rapidity. It was to no purpose that she drew more closely than ever

* Perhaps the annals of England cannot produce a character more worthy of admiration than this accomplished and gallant knight. A scholar, a poet, a courtier, yet a sincere and a good man, he was beloved by all with whom he came in contact; and his early death (he died of wounds received in a skirmish) was bewailed as a national calamity.

the bonds of amity with king James of Scotland, and that, distrusting Shrewsbury's vigilance rather than his honour, she placed Mary in the castle of Fotheringay, under the safe keeping of harsher gaolers, sir Amias Paulet and sir Drew Drury. The enemies both of Protestantism and of the queen's rights still found means to communicate with the captive; and, there is too much reason to believe, obtained from her a sort of sanction of the assassination which they continued to meditate. But though cautious, as well as resolute, they did not, in any instance, succeed in eluding the vigilance of the queen's ministers, Burleigh and Walsingham. These, on the contrary, traced every ramification of each new plot as it arose, and sometimes lent their aid to carry forward the arrangements, because of the issue in which they foresaw that the system must terminate.

It had long been clear to the members of the English cabinet, that there would be no rest for their country while the queen of Scots survived. Committed as they were by the wrongs already done, they felt that to restore her to liberty, far more to a throne, would lead to the most hazardous consequences; while to prolong her captivity was to keep alive the hopes of the disaffected, and to furnish a rallying point about which they could assemble. They determined to remove her at once; and framed, with that view, the iniquitous law of which mention has just been made. It was in the autumn of the year 1586, that a young gentleman named Babington, a man of ardent mind, a bigoted papist, and an enthusiast in Mary's cause, associated with himself five resolute friends in a scheme to effect her deliverance. The plan involved not only the murder of Elizabeth, but the invasion of England by a Spanish army; and the conspirators succeeded, as they believed, in making their intentions known to her who was chiefly to benefit by them. Neither Babington nor his associates were, however, a match for the wily

opponent with whom they measured themselves. Having permitted them to carry on their device to the exact point which was necessary for his purpose, Walsingham, the queen's secretary, issued orders for their arrest; and they were all, after a fair trial, convicted of treason, and brought to the block.

The death of these men, however, was not that which Walsingham and Burleigh desired to accomplish. They caused Mary's papers to be seized; and from them, as well as from the documents which had been found in possession of the conspirators, they made out what they termed to be a clear case, such as the recent statute had been framed to meet. After considerable hesitation, therefore, it was determined by the privy-council, to put the queen of Scots upon her trial; and forty persons, the most distinguished of Elizabeth's statesmen, were directed to act as judges. On the 14th of October, the commissioners, for so they were called, held their court in the great hall of the castle; and Mary, who had at first refused to plead before them, was induced, under a protest, to retract that refusal. By the attorney and solicitor-general, who conducted the prosecution, various deeds were brought forward,—such as copies of letters, in which the accused appeared to approve of an insurrection, the dying confessions of Babington and his associates, and an admission, from Mary's secretaries, that she had corresponded with Babington through the intervention of a priest called Ballard. Of some of these Mary denied the authenticity; while others she explained as implying in her no portion of guilt; but the minds of her judges were already made up ere the trial began. She was found guilty, as an agent in the late conspiracy, of having contrived and endeavoured the death of the queen; and received, in due time, sentence of death, to which all the commissioners, who met in the star-chamber for that purpose, affixed their seals and subscriptions.

There is no reason to doubt that the issue of this trial not only fulfilled Elizabeth's expectations, but corresponded with her wishes. The death of Mary, indeed, was an occurrence which she had long and earnestly desired; yet there was about her so much of coyness, even in a case of blood, that she expressed,—perhaps experienced, the greatest disinclination to sign the warrant of execution. Neither the entreaties of the parliament, nor the reasoning of her ministers, could overcome this feeling; a feeling, however, which in no degree disposed her to attend to the remonstrances of the king of Scotland, or to the threats and expostulations of the continental powers. Even by these limits, however, the inconsistencies of the queen were not bounded. She who exhibited so much reluctance to slay, by due course of law, scrupled not to tamper with Mary's keepers, touching the possibility of removing their prisoner, by some process which would attract less of public notice. But rough as these men were, they proved either too honest, or too cautious, to lend themselves to the purpose, and Elizabeth, when all other expedients were seen to fail, was compelled to sign the warrant. Even then, her constancy gave way, or seemed to do so. After delivering the deed to her secretary, Davison, and commanding him to carry it to the chancellor, she affected to have changed her mind; and burst forth into loud lamentations, when informed that it had passed into the hands of those whose duty it was to see that the queen's mandate was obeyed. Never was a piece of acting more clumsily performed, because no one was deceived by it. Elizabeth intended from the first that Mary should die; and her sole regret was, that there should not be found among her loving subjects, persons willing to sacrifice both honour and life, in order that her character might be screened from the ignominy of participating in the execution.

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On Tuesday, the 7th of February, 1587, the earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, together with the high-sheriff of the county, arrived at the castle of Fotheringay, and demanded to be admitted to the presence of the queen of Scots. They read to her the warrant for execution, and warned her to prepare for death next morning. Mary heard them to an end without emotion, and then devoutly crossing herself, replied, that she had long anticipated this conclusion to her sorrows, and was prepared for it. "As to the death of your queen," continued she, "I call God to witness that I never imagined, never sought it, nor ever consented to it; but the soul is not worthy of the joys of heaven which repines because the body must endure the stroke of the executioner." This she said while the commissioners stood by, not without an occasional interruption on their part, more especially from the earl of Kent, who indulged in unseemly abuse of her religion; and when they were withdrawn, and her attendants appeared overwhelmed with grief, she comforted them by observing, "This is not a time to weep, but to rejoice. In a few hours you will see the end of my misfortunes. My enemies may now say what they please; but the earl of Kent has betrayed the secret, that my religion is the real cause of my death. Be then resigned, and leave me to my devotions."

The calmness which dictated these speeches did not desert her to the last. She ate sparingly at supper, pledged the health of her servants in a cup of wine, exchanged forgivenesses with them in a very affecting manner, and gave them a few friendly cautions, as to the conduct of their future lives. The remainder of the night was spent, partly in devotional exercises, partly in the writing of her will, and partly in repose. But her sleep was light and broken; and her lips moved continually, as if in prayer, till day began to dawn. She then arose, and after distributing her

money and clothes among her domestics, withdrew to a little oratory, which joined her bed-room, where, kneeling before the altar, she continued to pour out her inmost soul in deep devotion. This continued till the sheriff arrived to announce that all things were ready, and that the hour of execution was come. Mary did not unnecessarily delay him. She followed to the great hall, in the middle of which a scaffold had been erected,—which was now surmounted by a block and a chair, the whole being covered with black cloth. Two executioners stood within a low railing, which surrounded the scaffold, while at the lower end of the hall were collected about two hundred spectators, of whom a large proportion were the halberdiers and guards of the castle. Mary beheld these preparations without exhibiting any signs of terror; but when sir Andrew Melville, the steward of her household, an old and faithful servant, who had for several weeks been excluded from her presence, threw himself on his knees before her, and began to bewail her fate, the softer feelings of nature for a moment prevailed. She burst into tears, and kissing the old man, exclaimed, "Good Melville cease to weep, thou hast rather cause to joy than mourn; for now thou shalt see Mary Stuart relieved from all her sorrows. Farewell, good Melville,—once again, farewell,—and pray for thy mistress and queen."

Amid the ill-suppressed sobs of her personal attendants, and not without a visible sorrow even in the countenances of her guards, Mary proceeded to lay aside her veil and upper garments; a task in which her servants could render very little assistance, by reason of their violent sorrow. She then listened, with great composure, to the warrant, which the proper officer read aloud, and at length mildly requested the dean of Peterborough, who spoke to her of a change of religion, to desist. She had lived, she said, a Catholic, and a

Catholic she would die; and taking a small crucifix in her hand, she addressed to the Redeemer her last prayer for pardon. This done, she laid her head upon the block, and with two strokes it was severed from her body. The headsman immediately seized it by the hair, which had grown gray from sorrow and long captivity, and holding it up exclaimed, according to the usual form in such cases, "God save queen Elizabeth!" "So perish all her enemies!" added the dean of Peterborough; but there was no voice save one, that of the earl of Kent, to say "Amen." All the rest were choked with sobs and tears.

Thus perished, in the forty-fifth year of her age, a princess eminent among her contemporaries for beauty, for accomplishments, perhaps for natural kindness of heart; but, beyond all question, for imprudence and the terrible extent of her misfortunes. From the hour of her birth, indeed, amid disaster and defeat, down to the bloody close of an eighteen years' captivity, Mary enjoyed few of the advantages which are supposed usually to attend upon exalted station and sovereign power. That this was owing entirely to her own errors, either as a queen or as a woman, it would be too much to assume. She was by far too civilized for the age in which she lived; too refined for the rude and turbulent people over whom it was her destiny to reign; while her attachment to the ancient religion secured the hatred of men equally ready to suffer martyrdom and to confer it. But it would be equally foreign to the truth were I to deny that Mary was guilty of many and grave mistakes, both in the conduct of her domestic manners, and in the arrangements of her government. Even if we acquit her of all participation in the murder of Darnley, concerning which, the evidence is, at the best, unsatisfactory; it is impossible to devise an excuse for her precipitate marriage with Bothwell; while the facility with which, both then

and previously, she lent herself to the designs of different factions, proved that she was not possessed of the kind of talent which was requisite for administering the affairs of such a country as Scotland. With respect, again, to the part which Elizabeth acted after her unhappy relative had taken refuge in England, though it stood open to the charge both of duplicity and injustice in the beginning, somewhat too much has been said respecting its enormity in the end. Elizabeth had certainly no right to detain, as a prisoner, an exile who sought hospitality at her hands; but having once committed that crime, all the rest of her proceedings flowed out of it as a matter of course. When Mary was first put upon her trial for conspiring the death of the queen of England, she had herself ceased to be a queen. The people of Scotland denied her authority; for that of James was recognised both at home and abroad; she was, therefore, just as much amenable to the laws of the land in which she resided, as any other individual within the realm. If then the proofs of her guilt were really such as to satisfy her judges, they committed no offence against the eternal law of right by condemning her. No doubt generosity might have dictated another mode of proceeding. She might have been dismissed the kingdom, or her confinement might have been rendered more rigorous. But the days of Elizabeth were not such as recognised, to a faulty degree, the claims of mere generosity. Mary was dangerous as the head of a hostile party; and so long as there appeared to be a fair ground for putting her to death, it would have been too much to expect from the politicians of the sixteenth century that they would neglect it. The ill-fated captive perished as much in consequence of the imprudence of her own friends as of the implacability of her enemies.

The hypocrisy of which Elizabeth had been guilty

prior to the execution of Mary, did not cease to display itself after the fatal blow had fallen. She affected the deepest sorrow, refused to see or converse with any one, accused her counsellors of doing that to which they knew that she was averse, and ordered the court into deep mourning. In the same spirit she despatched an embassy to Scotland, in order to deprecate the wrath of James; and assured him that he could not lament more sincerely, nor feel with half the bitterness that she did, the unfortunate accident which had occurred. James was a prudent and not a warlike prince. He first talked of avenging his mother's death, or losing life and kingdom in the attempt; nor were there wanting brave men, who put on armour as the best and only befitting mourning for the queen. But the concessions of Elizabeth, combined with a sense of his own weakness, and a consideration of the dangers which might accrue to the succession, determined him, in the end, to adhere to a pacific policy. The good correspondence which had, for a long space, been interrupted between the two countries, was resumed; and Elizabeth found leisure to turn her undivided attention to a quarter where danger was seen more immediately to threaten.

From the time that she made up her mind to espouse the cause of the Hollanders, Elizabeth, though still ostensibly at peace with Philip, had permitted her subjects to harass the trade and attack the possessions of the Spaniards in all parts of the world. Drake, Cavendish, and other bold mariners, carried a piratical war into the Indian seas, whence they returned, loaded with wealth, to receive titles of distinction from their mistress: while on shore, lord Willoughby, sir Francis De Vere, and others, nobly supported the military reputation of their country. Philip bore these aggressions, not indeed with indifference, but with a wonderful degree of equanimity, for some time. His remon-

strances were, however, disregarded; and notwithstanding the treachery of one or two officers of rank, who deserted with all their troops, he saw that, to reduce the Low Countries, so long as England continued to support them, would be impossible. He, therefore, began to prepare, on a scale of unexampled magnificence, for the invasion of England itself. With this view, every port throughout his extensive empire, from Palermo to the mouth of the Rhine, was commanded to equip a fleet, and provide naval and military stores: while the duke of Parma, the most renowned general of his age, was appointed to command an army, to which, both for its numbers and its discipline, Europe had, as yet, produced no parallel. Of these gigantic preparations neither Elizabeth nor her subjects long remained in ignorance. Alarmed they might be,—indeed there was ample ground of alarm; for long disuse had caused the English, as a people, to grow rusty in the art of war; and the navy consisted then of only thirty-four ships bearing the queen's commission, with such vessels as the maritime towns and trading companies saw fit to supply; yet the national character never showed itself to greater advantage. All ranks and orders of men ran to arms. Nobles and merchants vied with one another in fitting out ships; men of less ample fortunes enrolled themselves and their tenants into regiments of horse and foot. Nor, in this emergency, did differences in religious principles at all affect the patriotism of those who held them. In the face of a fresh bull of deposition, the Roman catholic gentlemen raised soldiers, with which, as they were not permitted to assume the command, they enrolled themselves as volunteers in the ranks; till the whole kingdom, from one extremity to another, presented the appearance of a huge camp. And well was Elizabeth calculated to keep alive the enthusiasm which her people displayed. She rode from post to

post, on horseback; spoke to the soldiers with a cheerful countenance, and declared her determination herself to lead them to battle, and to die with them in defence of their common religion and independence. The valour of the sailors did not, indeed, permit to these levies an opportunity of displaying in the field the value of their protestations; but there was not a man among them who failed to avow his determination either to repel the threatened invasion, or to perish.

On the 29th of May, 1588, the main body of the Spanish fleet sailed from the Tagus. It consisted of one hundred and thirty vessels, most of them of a size which had not previously been witnessed in Europe; and besides the crews of the different ships, contained not less than twenty thousand troops, with a prodigious train of artillery and other munitions of war. Of this mighty array, to which the Spaniards had given the name of the Invincible Armada, the duke of Medina Sidonia took the command; a brave man, but wholly unaccustomed to maritime adventure, and so far an unworthy successor to Santa Crux, a veteran seaman, renowned in many battles, who died just before the expedition was ready to put to sea. But the commencement of the enterprise was unfortunate, and it proved a sure presage to what was destined to follow. A storm took their fleet as it rounded Cape Finisterre, in consequence of which the admiral, after losing several of his vessels, was forced to withdraw, for purposes of repair, into the harbour of Corunna. Meanwhile the English navy, under the orders of the gallant lord Howard of Effingham, stood out to meet their enemies. They, too, were caught in the gale, and returned to Plymouth; a circumstance which contributed not slightly in the end to the preservation of their country; for the duke of Medina having been misinformed as to the amount of damage done, stood over to attack them, in direct violation of his instructions,

which forbade all minor actions till the army should have landed. Howard, however, having been warned of the enemy's approach by a Scotch pirate, instantly put to sea; and avoiding a general action, began a series of skilful skirmishes, which soon satisfied both parties of their relative fitness to contend for the supremacy of the ocean.

The English seamen, though comparatively few in number, were as skilful and enterprising as their opponents were the reverse; and their ships, though inferior in bulk and weight of armament, proved infinitely more pliable under every change of weather. They could choose at will their own position, and either cannonaded the Spaniards from a distance, or closed upon them, according as circumstances invited, and the chance of success appeared to guide. The Spaniards, on the other hand, unaccustomed to navigate ships so bulky, fell into total confusion, from which they never recovered. They sought shelter in Calais roads; but Howard, arming six of his smaller pinnaces as fire-ships, sent them adrift, and the Spaniards cut their cables in alarm, and fled in all directions. It was now evident to the duke of Parma, who, with 34,000 men, occupied the sea-coast about Dunkirk, that the intentions of his master were frustrated. He, therefore, refused to intrust his splendid army to the convoy of a fleet which had shown itself inadequate to face that of the islanders; while the admiral, after a fruitless endeavour to bring about a change of purpose, saw that it would be necessary for him to return with as little delay as possible to Spain. But the winds blew unfavourably; the Spaniards wanted both the courage and the skill to face them, and the duke of Medina, in an evil hour, determined to circumnavigate Great Britain. He weighed anchor, and was again assailed in his voyage by the lighter and more pliable squadrons which watched him. These did him con-

siderable damage, capturing several ships, and crippling more; but that from which he chiefly suffered was a furious gale of wind, which overtook him when entangled among the Orkneys. Numerous vessels were lost in that gale, with all their crews and passengers; insomuch, that of the gallant army which had quitted their native country full of confidence and courage, scarcely one-half returned, to fill both the palace and the cottage with the most alarming accounts of the inhospitality of the English seas, and the indomitable valour of English sailors.

Elated by this success into a remembrance of their ancient military glory, the English hastened to convert a war of defence into its opposite, and equipped numerous armaments, which carried fire and sword into almost all the maritime quarters of Philip's dominions. They were the more encouraged to pursue this daring policy by the course which events had taken in France. Henry the Third, not at any time cordial in his adhesion to the Catholic league, became at last so jealous of the duke of Guise, that in open violation of the laws of honour and hospitality, he put him to death, while a guest under his own roof. The crime was an atrocious one, and went not long unpunished; for a fanatical Dominican, by name Jaques Clement, distrusting the Catholicity of the king, stabbed him in the midst of his courtiers while engaged in conversation. By this act Henry the Fourth, the most accomplished prince of the house of Bourbon, assumed the sceptre; who though a Huguenot, and the leader of the party against which the zeal of the league was directed, yet contrived to win over to his cause not a few of the more moderate among the Roman Catholics. To Henry. Elizabeth proved a powerful and a steady friend. She supplied him with money, she furnished him with troops, which well supported the renown of their forefathers; nor did she withdraw her alliance

when motives of humanity, as well as of ambition, induced him to feign a conversion to popery, of which the sincerity may be doubted. But it was not through the side of France alone, nor yet in the Netherlands, that she carried on, with equal vigour and success, the war against Philip. Lisbon was attacked; Cadiz taken and plundered, and the whole of the sea-board, from that point to Corunna, kept in a state of alarm; while in the West Indies, in South America, and among the Azores, the English made themselves terrible both to the settlers on shore and the voyagers at sea. There were, at this period, many brave and skilful navigators in the queen's service, who devoted themselves to such exploits; and who laid the foundation of that high character which has ever since attached to the English nation. Sir Walter Raleigh, sir Francis Drake, sir John Hawkins, James Lancaster, these, with the young earl of Essex, and many others besides, displayed a degree of enterprise and talent which have never been surpassed, and struck dismay into the hearts of the enemy wherever their flags were unfurled, as well in the old world as in the new.

Endowed by nature with indomitable courage, and taking especial delight in deeds of heroism, Elizabeth lavished upon the successful commanders, both of her fleets and armies, numerous marks of favour. Among them all, however, there was not one who stood so high in her affections as the young earl of Essex. She had raised him, at the age of twenty-one, to the rank of captain-general of horse, and treated him with a degree of fondness which resembled that of a mother for a spoiled child, rather than of a sovereign for one of her subjects. Nor did Essex himself bear a trivial resemblance to the object of a doting mother's fondness. Brave, impetuous, accomplished, he was, at the same time, proud, wayward, and irritable; one who often quarrelled with his best friends about the turn of

a straw, and as often repented of his rashness. I have ranked Essex among the warriors who contributed to raise the military glory of their country; yet was his reputation that of a fearless, rather than of a skilful soldier. Danger he seemed to love for its own sake: be his rank what it might, he took his station always where the battle raged most warmly; and hence, his qualifications for command, of whatever order they might be, never found an opportunity to display themselves. Still there was that about him which eminently qualified him to make an impression on the romantic mind of his mistress; and hence, when the death of Leicester had dissolved a tie, in which her happiness was supposed to have been wrapped up, it was seen, not without surprise, that, in the society of this new favourite, her grief was almost immediately forgotten, together with him who was the cause of it.

From his first appearance as a favourite with the queen, Essex became an object of rooted dislike to multitudes. Raleigh, his rival both for glory and in royal favour, naturally viewed him with aversion. Burleigh, the aged and sagacious counsellor, disliked him; and all who followed the fortunes of the minister joined in the sentiment. On the other hand, there were numbers, including the lord Mountjoy, the earls of Rutland and Southampton, who, jealous of the ascendancy so long exercised by the Cecils, were ready to support either him or any other individual who might appear likely to put an end to it. The reader would be little interested were I to describe the many contemptible displays of ill-humour and spleen which this spirit of rivalry called forth. Enough is done, when I state that Essex, though repeatedly in disgrace, (once, indeed, for laying his hand on his sword when saluted by the queen herself with a box on the ear,) still continued to surmount his difficulties; and even prevailed, in opposition to the wishes of

Burleigh and his friends, in preventing a peace with Spain. This, with other triumphs, of a more mercenary nature, because connected with appointments conferred upon their respective followers, rendered the hatred of the Cecils more and more deep-rooted; and the opportunity was sought with eagerness of bringing about the ruin of a man, whose very faults seemed only to endear him to his infatuated sovereign.

The death of Burleigh, August 4th, 1598, appeared to ensure to Essex an absolute ascendancy in the cabinet; and his friends, actuated perhaps by motives not wholly disinterested, urged him to aim at that prize, and that only; but Essex himself, whose restlessness and love of fame years seemed not to abate, desired another and a more hazardous field of action. He solicited the appointment of lord-deputy of Ireland, a country which was then suffering all the distresses incident upon a successful rebellion; and, as his enemies brought their influence to the support of his, under the idea that they might profit by his removal from court, the suit was not rejected. Elizabeth granted his petition; and, together with the title of lord-lieutenant, conferred upon him powers more ample than any of his predecessors had exercised. Before, however, I go on to describe the uses to which these powers were turned, it will be necessary to say a few words touching the general condition of the island,—of which a new conquest was now about to be attempted.

The reader will not have forgotten that from the day in which Ireland was first invaded by Strongbow and his followers, the kings of England had exercised, in their mode of administering the affairs of that island, a policy as narrow as it was unjust and unwise. Instead of bringing the people to a willing obedience, first of all by a series of connected military operations, and then by introducing among them the arts of civilized life,

they treated them, from age to age, as creatures of a different species; making grants of territory to individuals as often as they were applied for, and permitting the persons thus privileged to expel the unhappy natives with fire and sword, or to reduce them to slavery. Of the noblemen and gentlemen thus sent over to harass rather than to protect the Irish, not a few laid aside, by degrees, both the manners and the dress of their native country, and became almost as savage, and, of course, quite as turbulent, as those whom they had dispossessed. Meanwhile the natives, taking refuge among the bogs and fastnesses in the interior, dwelt, as their remote forefathers had done, under the government of the chiefs of clans. The learning for which they had once been distinguished died out, the piety which rendered their priesthood renowned throughout Europe was forgotten, and nothing remained but a bigoted attachment to the church of Rome, and a blind ignorance, and an implacable hatred towards the English.

In such a state of society, where there was no law but the will of each conqueror,—where institutions the most contradictory were established at different parts of the island, and of royal forces, properly so called, the total amount rarely came up to two thousand men,—it is easy to believe, that seditions, feuds, intestine strife, and civil wars, would continually prevail. Had I paused, indeed, to describe such scenes as were enacted under every prince from Edward the First downwards, I should have swelled this history to more than twice the limits allotted to it. Such a proceeding, however, was not necessary, for the transactions at one period of time resembled in almost every particular those which occurred at another. If the strangers seemed disposed to rest quiet in their settlements, the natives never failed to attack them,—if the former endeavoured to win with their swords a wider territory,

it was disputed inch by inch. Thus alternately conquering and assailed, a dominion of four hundred years' continuance tended only to render the English name more odious, and their yoke more galling.

Among the ancient Milesian clans or tribes there was none more warlike or more distinguished than that of O'Neale. Many times had the chief made head against the Saxons, and though defeated and held under for a generation, the next was sure to produce a warrior willing and ready to risk life and character in the struggle for independence. During the earlier period of Elizabeth's reign, Shan O'Neale, or O'Neale the Great, as his countrymen and adherents called him, had repeatedly raised the standard of rebellion, not without success. He was a perfect barbarian, in every sense of the term,—ruthless, cruel, intemperate, and overbearing. Yet it was not till 1567, that he was totally put down by sir Henry Sidney, one of the wisest and best deputies that ever guided the destinies of Ireland. Other rebellions followed, one of which, that of 1579, was supported by a body of Spanish and Italian troops; but they were all rather smothered over than repressed; so that a country naturally fertile, which ought to have contributed largely to the revenue of the empire, was found to entail a heavy annual expense upon the treasury.

Thus it was till 1585, when sir John Perrot, then lord-deputy, put arms, with too much incaution, into the hands of the men of Ulster, that they might be in a condition to repel, without the assistance of the government, the piratical attacks to which they were liable from the inhabitants of the Scottish islands. It chanced that, at this critical juncture, an excessive zeal for the Romish religion induced many persons from that province to take service in the armies of Philip, and to learn the art of war in the Netherlands. These came back by ones and twos to their own land; and finding

abundance of arms in readiness, and multitudes accustomed to wield them, they began to organize a more regular resistance than had yet been offered to their hereditary enemies.

Hugh O'Neale, nephew to Shan O'Neale, had been raised by queen Elizabeth to the dignity of earl of Tyrone, with the hope that he might thereby become attached to the government which promoted him, and aid in preserving peace. O'Neale was a worthy scion of the stock from which he descended. Having murdered his cousin, the son of Shan, he took rank as head of the sept, and exerted all his influence to excite, in every corner of the island, the spirit of disaffection. O'Neale was a brave, but he was also a politic man. He knew that his undisciplined, and, comparatively speaking, ill-armed followers, were no match for the trained soldiers of Elizabeth, and he therefore deceived the deputy by continual tenders of submission, while he was organizing the means of resistance. He thus contrived to baffle Norris, one of the ablest generals of his age, who could never obtain an advantage over him; while Bagnal, his successor, he overthrew in a pitched battle, by surprising him on his march to relieve the castle of Blackwater. Great, indeed, was the effect of this victory. From sea to sea, Ireland rose in arms, and O'Neale, assuming the title of deliverer of his country, was hailed as sovereign by the people.

Such was the state of Ireland, when Essex, inflamed with the lust of renown, solicited and obtained the office of lord-lieutenant. He was furnished, as I have stated, with powers more than usually extensive, while an army of twenty thousand foot, and two thousand horse, was placed under his immediate command. Nor can it be denied, that from Essex great things were expected. His reputation for courage, perhaps for conduct, stood high; he had often condemned the systems pursued by his predecessors, especially that of warring

in detail; and it was naturally enough anticipated, that his movements would be marked by a decision, of which those even of the most distinguished among them could not boast. The public disappointment was, therefore, proportionably keen, when it was found, that, either swayed by the advice of his council, or actuated by some other motive, he had forgotten his own theories, and instead of applying them, pursued in practice the devices of others. Essex, in a word, did nothing worthy of his renown. He undertook sundry petty expeditions, permitted his soldiers to die of fatigue and privations, became the dupe of the superior artifice of Tyrone, and entered with him into a negotiation for peace. The insinuations of his enemies were scarcely needed to excite, under such circumstances, the anger of Elizabeth. She reminded him of the high hopes with which he had amused her, reproached him with wantonly neglecting his duty, and commanded him to remain in Ireland till he should have retrieved his honour.

Conscious of his own failure, and smarting under the sense of disgrace, Essex wrote frequent and peevish letters to his mistress, in which he endeavoured to cast the blame upon those with whom he was associated; and even upbraided herself with fickleness and want of faith. These called forth no answer, and the earl, in a fit of petulant despair, suddenly quitted his post, and hastened to throw himself at the queen's feet. As he made his way into her chamber, unannounced and unexpected, he was at first received with marks of affection; but, on the morrow, when he would have renewed the visit, a different reception attended him. He was commanded to consider himself a prisoner in his own house, and deprived of all his official employments. Essex strove to soften the queen with the appearance of a ready submission. He even took to his bed, and had the satisfaction to find that he was

neither forgotten nor disregarded; for she sent him broth from her own table, and desired the physician to say, that had it been consistent with her sense of honour she would have visited him in person. Still she relaxed not, on his recovery, from her sternness. He was examined before the privy-council, found guilty, and banished the court. Unfortunately for Essex, his successor, lord Mountjoy, put down in one campaign the rebellion which had baffled all his exertions; and the queen, more and more incensed, became more and more determined to break his proud spirit, of which she had so often felt the force. It so happened, that Essex enjoyed one of those monopolies with which, during Elizabeth's reign, it was the practice to enrich court favourites; he was the exclusive dealer in sweet wines. The period for the expiration of his monopoly drew nigh, and he applied to have it renewed. The request was denied; and he who had played the hypocrite for many months, associating only with Puritans, and holding frequent prayer-meetings in his house, threw off the mask, and rushed into a desperate enterprise.

Essex was very popular: in some degree, doubtless, by reason of his own winning manner, but much more because of the distinguished place which he was believed to hold in the queen's affections. He was weak enough to attribute that popularity to his own personal merits, and expecting a ready support from the citizens of London, he devised a wild scheme for seizing the queen's person. Never did man more completely err in his calculations. Not a voice was raised, not a sword drawn in his cause; and, after a mad progress through several of the streets, he was forced to retire to his own house, where he was made prisoner. To commit him to the Tower, and to try him for high-treason, were measures which could scarcely be avoided. He was condemned to die; and he bore himself under the

sentence, as he had done during the proceedings, with admirable firmness. When conveyed back to his dungeon, however, the love of life, as was natural, returned, and he made one effort more to preserve it. In other and happier days, during one of those hours of dalliance in which the queen even to the last delighted, she had given him a ring, with instructions, if ever he should be in trouble, to send it to her, and she would prove that her friendship was not evanescent. He intrusted that ring to the countess of Nottingham, the wife of a man who secretly hated him, and it never reached the eyes of Elizabeth. The consequence was that she, who only waited for this appeal, and who, when it was not made, attributed the circumstance to the excessive pride of the condemned, affixed, in a moment of irritation and chagrin, her signature to the warrant; and Essex was beheaded, by virtue of his sentence, within the Tower. But the queen became, from that hour, an altered woman. She doted upon him in spite of all his foibles; she forgot these foibles as soon as he had ceased to live, and she was not seen to smile, or to take any interest in her accustomed amusements, from the day of his execution. It is true, that she continued to transact business with her wonted diligence. She even meditated a plan for establishing a balance of power in Europe, by erecting the whole of the Netherlands, including the duchy of Luxembourg, into a state; a device which Henry of France had likewise considered, and which he was prevented from assisting her to realize only by the distracted condition of his own realm. In like manner, her firmness in dealing with the parliament relaxed not; and she continued as eager as ever in enforcing conformity with the established religion. But Elizabeth's private hours were no more what they used to be; her health, too, began to decline; and it was evident, even to the most infatuated among her attendants, that she had not long to live.

It chanced that at this juncture the countess of Nottingham was seized with a violent distemper. She believed that it would prove fatal, and sending for the queen, unburdened her oppressed conscience by confessing the artifice of which she had been guilty. "I have not many hours to live," continued she, "and I pray your majesty to smooth my pillow, by giving me your pardon!" The queen gazed at her for a few moments in silent horror. She then seized her by the shoulder, shook her violently, and cried, "God may pardon you, but I never can!" She then burst from the chamber; but the shock proved too much for a declining constitution. She refused all food, lay upon the floor day and night, and spoke only in groans and sighs, and inarticulate words. Her medical attendants pronounced her dying; and Cecil, the son of the great Burleigh, who had succeeded to a share of his father's merits and influence, hastened to question her touching the succession. Her answer was very explicit. She would have a king to succeed her, and who so fit as the king of the Scots. She was then advised by the archbishop of Canterbury to fix her thoughts wholly upon God, and made answer that she did so. It was the last sentence which she uttered; for falling soon afterwards into a lethargic slumber, she expired without a groan, on the 24th of March, 1603, in the seventieth year of her age, and forty-fifth of her reign.

The character of Elizabeth is so completely developed in the history of her private and public proceedings, that any attempt to set it forth by analysis or abridgment seems unnecessary. As a queen she possessed in no ordinary degree the talents necessary for conducting a government; as a woman, she was more than commonly subject to the infirmities of temper and disposition which are said to attach to the sex. Perfectly fearless,—not much given to the melting mood,—yet cautious, politic, perhaps wily, she considered that her

first duty was to provide for the independence and honour of her country, and that to it all considerations of the welfare of other states, ought to be made subservient. With these notions, it is true, was inseparably associated an inordinate desire to maintain her own power; yet, however lax she may have been touching the means of upholding the latter, it is impossible to deny that in the abstract she argued justly.

In private life, again, her most ardent admirer cannot acquit her of conduct, which, to say the least of it, was extremely unbecoming; while the manners of the court are admitted to have been the reverse of pure. Still it is the height of prejudice to deny, that Elizabeth was a great and an able sovereign; and that to her, and to the renowned statesmen whom she had the wisdom to take into her confidence, England is indebted for much of that lofty character which still belongs to it.

During the reign of this illustrious princess, the government of England, though less despotic, perhaps, than it had been under her father, cannot be said to have depended, in any important degree, upon the will of the people. The crown, indeed, was supreme, with one solitary exception, that it was not permitted to levy taxes without an act of parliament; but over men's behaviour as citizens, the court of the Star-Chamber gave to it the same arbitrary control which the commission-court enabled it to exercise over their religious opinions. It is true that even the question of revenue lies, in this reign, open to discussion. Burleigh, at least, seems to have imagined, that the right which Henry exercised of exacting taxes at pleasure had devolved to his daughter; while the custom of benevolences, or forced loans, was not only acknowledged, but practised. Of purveyance, likewise, that is to say, of the privilege which enabled the sove-

reign to collect, wherever he went, the means of subsistence for his retinue, Elizabeth made frequent use. She was greatly addicted to what was termed progresses, in other words, to journeys of state from place to place within the realm; and never failed, at each stage, to lay the surrounding land-holders under contribution, in order that her own wants, and those of her attendants, might be supplied.

Besides these indirect modes of increasing the revenue, the sovereign was, in those days, accustomed to grant monopolies to an extraordinary amount; to lay embargoes on merchandise which the merchants were preparing to export; and to levy duties on goods brought from abroad without a special license. In almost all other respects, the subjects were as completely under control, as if there had been no such institution as the two houses of parliament. The nobility could not marry without permission from the crown; no man, whatever his rank, could travel except with a passport; nor was any foreigner permitted to establish himself in England unless licensed by the proper authorities: yet with all this the people were contented; for never was a sovereign more beloved than this queen, who committed to prison even the members of the House of Commons, if they presumed to agitate questions of which she had forbidden them to take notice.

The revenues of Elizabeth, like those of her predecessors, arose chiefly from the produce of crown lands, which were occasionally increased by grants from the parliament, and from the duties already alluded to, as imposed upon merchandise. They were not, however, adequate to the expenses of the times; and hence, Elizabeth, though prudent even to parsimoniousness, left her pecuniary affairs in a state of embarrassment, which occasioned no trifling distress to her successors during many generations.

In detailing the events of the reign itself, sufficient notice has been taken of the great religious questions which then agitated, and eventually convulsed, the minds of men. In proportion as Popery lost ground, a spirit of extreme fanaticism showed itself, which, as it waged a war of extermination against the religion which she had carefully established, Elizabeth conceived that she was bound to suppress with the hand of power. All her exertions, however, proved insufficient to eradicate principles which partook not more of a religious than of a political character; and which, though concealed for a time, brought about, at a convenient season, a complete revolution in the constitution of this country. But that, perhaps, for which this period of English history deserves to be considered as most conspicuous, is the spirit of commercial enterprise which sprang up among all classes, and of which the good effects continue to be felt down to the present day. In this reign Martin Forbisher made his daring but unsuccessful efforts to discover what our own Parry and Ross have failed to find; and Davis gave his name to the Straits which are now visited, from season to season, by our hardy whalers. The East India Company, also, received from Elizabeth its first charter. Under her, the trade with Muscovy and Turkey was opened; and England became, in many respects, a formidable rival even to the traders of the Hanse Towns. Nor can we speak in contemptuous terms either of the naval or military resources of a nation, which could overthrow the Invincible Armada, at the same time that it had a force embodied on shore, which amounted to not less than fifty-five thousand foot, and upwards of three thousand cavalry. It is true that the land-forces were mere militia, raised for the emergency, and dismissed as soon as danger passed away; and that of the fleet, which achieved so signal a victory, a large portion was the property of

individuals. But the spirit of the people was good; and wherever there is a good spirit there are to be found materials out of which either a fleet or an army can, at any moment, be constructed.

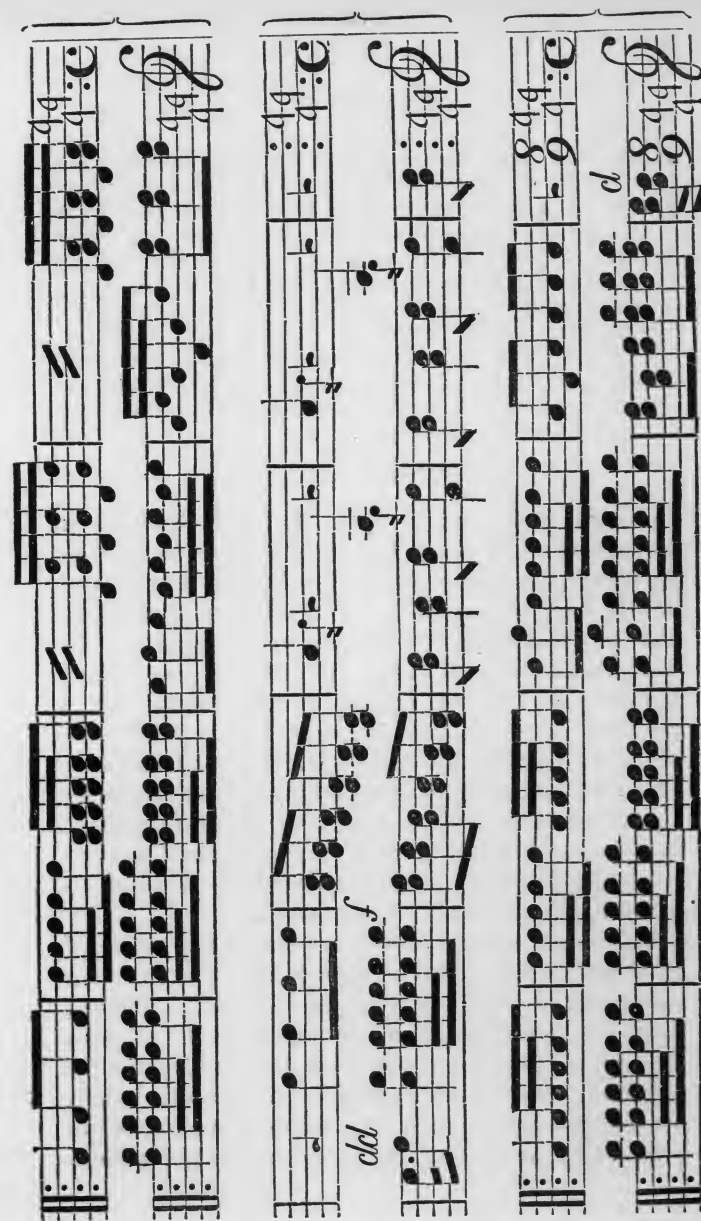
Of the domestic manners of this age a few words will be sufficient to convey an idea. The nobility and higher classes of gentry were profusely hospitable, even to the impairing of their fortunes, and the gradual dissolution of their influence. What would now be termed the middling classes imitated the example, as far as their circumstances would allow; but of the peasantry, or labourers in general, the condition was very wretched. They had not yet acquired habits of regular industry; and the dissolution of the monasteries having deprived them of the charitable aid which had formerly been afforded, multitudes perished of want. To remedy this evil, a law was enacted, which imposed upon parishes the burden of supporting their aged and destitute poor; a humane statute, of which the results have proved eminently mischievous, through the culpable negligence of those by whom its provisions were at one period administered. Great extravagance in dress was the prevailing foible of the day,—a foible in which the queen herself set the example; for she is stated to have left, at her decease, upwards of three thousand different robes, all of them fit for use, and all occasionally worn. In the department of letters, again, the Elizabethan era can boast of many and illustrious names. Among poets we have Sidney, Spenser, and, above all, Shakspeare. Among scholars, Ascham stands conspicuous; Hooker alone would vindicate the reputation of the divines; while among lawyers, sir Edward Coke holds a place to which there is, perhaps, none superior. But a taste for literature was not confined to any particular circle. The queen herself was well-read both in the classics and in the works of more modern times. She was mistress of the

French, the Italian, and Spanish languages; spoke them correctly, and wrote them with tolerable accuracy. As a matter of course, the example which she set was eagerly followed by the courtiers; who again diffused among their dependants and followers a taste for those pursuits in which they either did or appeared to take delight. So marked were the changes in men's manners, which, within the space of a few years, one mighty discovery had brought about; so important the results which a release from the bondage of a galling superstition was able to effect.



Great Seal of Elizabeth.

The piece of music on the opposite page is the air which was played by the band at Fotheringay-castle, while Mary was proceeding to her execution. The air itself is a very touching one; and appears, from its extreme simplicity, well fitted for the rude instruments which were then in use. A fortunate accident threw a copy of it in my way, and I have inserted it, because I see no reason to doubt the tradition which connects it with this period in English history.



CHAPTER IV.

JAMES THE FIRST.—HIS EARLY UNPOPULARITY.—CONFERENCE AT HAMPTON COURT.—GUNPOWDER PLOT.—RALEIGH'S CONSPIRACY.—DISSENSIONS WITH THE PARLIAMENT.—THE KING'S FAVOURITES.—THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH MARRIED TO THE PALATINE.—THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MATCH.—DEATH OF PRINCE HENRY.—NEGOTIATION FOR THE MARRIAGE OF PRINCE CHARLES WITH THE INFANTA OF SPAIN.—CHARLES AND BUCKINGHAM GO TO MADRID IN DISGUISE.—THE TREATY BROKEN OFF.—WAR WITH SPAIN.—CHARLES MARRIES A FRENCH PRINCESS.—DEATH OF JAMES.—HIS CHARACTER.—MISCELLANEOUS TRANSACTIONS.

[A.D. 1603 to A.D. 1625.]

For some time previous to the death of Elizabeth, an intimate correspondence had been maintained between sir Robert Cecil, the head of the English cabinet, and James, king of Scotland. It was strictly confidential, and not unattended with hazard to the minister; for even his merits, great as they were, would have availed him nothing, had any accident revealed the intrigue to his mistress. The effect, however, was to render the accession of the Scottish monarch perfectly safe and easy. Elizabeth had scarcely breathed her last, when James was proclaimed; and, a deputation being despatched to Edinburgh for the purpose of acquainting him with what had happened, he made immediate preparations to take possession of the vacant throne.

There is a general disposition among the people of all countries, to look with favour upon a new ruler; nor was James cut off, by reason of his foreign lineage, from the kindly feelings of his English subjects. During his progress from Berwick to London, the multitude everywhere pressed upon him, and strove, by the customary process of shouting and noise, to evince their respect for his merits, and their attach-

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ment to his person. But James was not endowed with a temper on which such acts of loyalty were calculated to produce a favourable impression. Though sociable and familiar with his friends and courtiers, he abhorred the bustle of a crowd; and prohibited, by proclamation, the well-intentioned meetings of his somewhat boisterous lieges. This was not a very politic step for the successor of Elizabeth to take,—one of whose chief merits it was, that she seemed to enter with all her heart into the amusements of the populace, and to relish their rude caresses. But it was wise and prudent, when compared with other measures which his natural impetuosity impelled James to adopt. A man was caught in the act of marauding during the royal progress. He was not brought to trial, but suffered death on the spot, by the king's command. In like manner, James made no effort to conceal his hatred to the memory of his illustrious predecessor. The bare mention of her name drew from him expressions of dislike, nay her very talents he affected to hold cheap, while he denounced her morals. Now though the summary execution of a plunderer might be just in the abstract, and though there were doubtless grounds enough of personal hostility between James and Elizabeth, it showed very little knowledge of the English character to do that by the power of the prerogative, which could have been equally well done by due course of law, and still less to speak contemptuously of one who had reigned not more over the persons than in the hearts of her subjects. James's popularity had suffered a serious diminution ere he reached London; and it was not reinvigorated by the closer view which men were then enabled to take, both of his private habits and of his public conduct.

James came to England full of the most exaggerated notions of the wealth and power to which he had succeeded. He believed himself to be, in the most

extended sense of the term, an absolute monarch, and he possessed not the prudence, under any circumstances, to conceal that belief. His liberality, also, more particularly towards those of his countrymen who followed his fortunes, was both weak and mischievous. He impoverished himself to load them with riches and honours; indeed the inconsiderate prodigality with which titles were bestowed upon the natives of both kingdoms, soon brought one of the most valuable of the crown's prerogatives into contempt. But it was not in these particulars alone that James exhibited a remarkable ignorance of the principles of good government, and of the genius of the people over whom he had been called upon to preside. His domestic policy was that of the chief of a faction; his foreign, contradicted the fondest prejudices of his subjects. How far he might have committed himself, while yet looking to the succession, by any promises or implied promises, to the Puritans, to the Papists, or to both, it is hard to say. But he was scarcely across the border ere deputations from these rival parties met him; the one soliciting a further extension of reformation in church matters; the other praying for a relaxation of the penal laws under which they groaned. James contrived, by his mode of dealing with these petitions, to disgust and exasperate the bodies from which they came, while he excited in the minds of churchmen in general, an uneasy suspicion that his good faith was not wholly to be relied upon.

The first year of this monarch's reign was marked by one or two events of considerable importance at the moment, and to which it is necessary at least to advert. For some cause or another, which has never been satisfactorily explained, sir Walter Raleigh, the lords Grey and Cobham, sir Griffin Markham, and others, entered into a conspiracy to seize the king's person. As they were altogether disunited in their opinions

and sentiments, it seems difficult to conjecture the use to which they could have turned success, however ample, for Grey was a Puritan, Markham a Papist, and Cobham, like Raleigh, of whom he was the tool, a sort of free-thinker in politics and religion. But the plot was discovered, the conspirators arrested, and put upon their trial as traitors. The evidence against them was sufficient to satisfy their judges, and they were all condemned; but only two persons, both Roman Catholic priests of little account, suffered. Grey, Cobham, and Markham, after their heads had been laid upon the block, received a pardon, while Raleigh, though respited, continued, during fifteen long years, to drag out a melancholy existence as a prisoner in the Tower.

The alarm of Raleigh's conspiracy having passed away, and the ceremony of his own coronation being gone through, James, whom the Puritans continued to harass with complaints of ecclesiastical abuses, determined to bring the points at issue between them and the bishops to a hearing. With this view he commanded a deputation from the remonstrants to meet the prelates at Hampton Court, where, on the 14th of January, 1604, he himself appeared. There is good reason to believe that the king would have willingly conceded much, had he found the complainants at all moderate in their demands; but this proved not to be the case. They aimed at a total subversion of episcopacy, a form of church-government to which James was sincerely attached; and as James would in no wise sanction the most remote approximation to that issue, the conference led to nothing. A few alterations, chiefly explanatory, were indeed introduced into some of the services, and the practice of the commissary courts was ordered to be revised; but in every other respect, the spirit of innovation was resisted, and its advocates treated with coldness. The consequence

was an increased hostility, on their part, towards the Church; as well as a more marked distaste to the civil government by which it was fostered and upheld.

From this conference of divines the king proceeded to meet his parliament, which, after a prolonged recess, occasioned by the terrors of a plague, once more met for the transaction of business. He found it, on almost all subjects, more disposed to wrangle with him concerning their mutual rights and privileges, than to supply those pecuniary wants of which he began already to experience the pressure.

The truth indeed is, that the House of Commons had learned, even during the latter years of Elizabeth's reign, to feel and to act upon its own importance. Of its members, moreover, a considerable proportion were strongly tinged with the principles of Puritanism; and with these, the results of the Hampton Court controversy told very unfavourably, in reference to their dealings with the crown. Principles which had been acted upon under all the sovereigns of the House of Tudor, were now repudiated. The right of the king to grant monopolies in the conduct of trade, was called in question; the customs of purveyance, of wardship, and other feudal rights, were denounced; and a project was entertained of commuting them for an annual pension of fifty thousand pounds. These proceedings, together with the refusal of a subsidy, exceedingly provoked the monarch; but that which distressed him more than all the rest, was the coldness with which a proposition for a legislative union between England and Scotland was received. It had been the favourite project of his whole political life; he employed every possible expedient to accomplish it; but neither now, nor afterwards, could he prevail upon the Commons of England seriously to entertain the idea. James took the disappointment much to heart; nor was his grief diminished, when he saw that, even in ecclesias-

tical matters, the popular branch of the legislature evinced a disposition to interfere. In a word, the first session of his first parliament proved to James exceedingly unsatisfactory; and he brought it to a close with a fearful conviction on his mind, that the power of the crown was not more absolute in England, than he had found it to be in his native country.

If James had ever seriously wavered respecting the line which it behoved him to adopt, amid the clashing interests of the several religious parties into which the nation was divided, the results of the conference at Hampton Court seem to have determined him to espouse zealously the cause of the establishment, and of it alone. The convocation having enacted a body of canons for the regulation of divers matters affecting the discipline and service of the church, the clergy were required by their respective diocesans to signify their obedience, and all who refused, were, after sufficient time devoted to discussion, deprived of their benefices. The numbers thus deposed proved to be very inconsiderable, they scarcely amounted to fifty individuals; but they were an active and a fearless band, who filled the country with complaints of their own harsh usage, and of the king's vehement leaning towards Popery. No charge could be less just than the latter; yet it was supported by evidence which excited, in the minds of more than the Puritan party, a good deal of uneasiness. It was shown that James had permitted the most severe of the penal laws against the Roman Catholics to fall into disuse. He had connived at the celebration of the mass in private families, and had not expelled, as the law required, all priests and missionaries from the shores of England. He now made haste to rescue himself from so foul a calumny. In the face, as the Papists affirmed, of an old pledge to the contrary, a proclamation appeared, renewing the legal fine of twenty pounds per month upon all recusants,

and requiring, not only that it should be regularly paid in all time coming, but that arrears should be made good. The ferment occasioned by this measure among the body against whom it was directed, was, as he expected, very great; and there arose out of it one of the most atrocious, as well as extravagant plots, of which the history of the world makes mention.

There was one Robert Catesby, the descendant of an ancient and opulent family, which had been settled, during several generations, at Ashby St. Leger's, in Northamptonshire, and was likewise possessed of considerable property in the county of Warwick. The father of this man, a zealous Roman Catholic, had more than once been imprisoned for recusancy, but the son, as soon as he attained to the years of discretion, abandoned the faith of his ancestors, and without professing any religion at all, impaired both his fortune and his health by his excesses. In 1598, he became again a Papist; and a disposition naturally sanguine taking a novel turn, he devoted all his energies to the advancement of the Romish religion. Catesby was one of the desperate band, who, after stipulating for perfect liberty of conscience, joined Essex in his revolt. He had been from the first a strenuous opponent of the claims of the king of Scots; and he was now wound up to a pitch of fury, by the exaction of repeated fines, which left him master of no ideas except such as seemed to bear upon the avenging of his church's wrongs, by the destruction of her oppressors.

Negotiations for peace with Spain were by this time far advanced; indeed, it had been one of the first acts in James's reign to put an end to a war in which he himself took no interest, however agreeable it might be to the prejudices of his subjects. To foreign aid, therefore, Catesby could not look; and from any open insurrection he was aware that no good result could ensue. He resolved to play a darker and a more desperate

game; he determined to destroy at once both the king and the members of the legislature, by blowing up the parliament-house with gunpowder. For some time he pondered this hideous project alone; but finding the necessity of some confidant and associate, he opened his mind, at length, to an old acquaintance, Thomas, the younger brother of Robert Winter, of Huddington, in Worcestershire. Winter was greatly shocked by the proposal, and for a time resisted it. But the artful reasonings of his friend gradually undermined his better principles, and he stipulated, in the end, only for such delay as should enable them to solicit the mediation of the Spanish ambassador in their favour. The Spanish ambassador proved lukewarm, as Catesby had anticipated. Nevertheless the journey which Winter undertook for the purpose of sounding him threw in their way an associate of incalculable value,—namely, Guy Fawkes, a native of Yorkshire, a soldier of fortune, and a man of indomitable courage. Him Winter brought back from Ostend,—where, being thrown out of service in the Spanish army, he was sojourning; and he became, in due time, not only a partner in the councils of the cabal, but the most forward instrument in carrying them into execution.

While Winter was thus occupied abroad, Catesby had communicated his secret to two persons at home, namely, to Thomas Percy, a relative of the earl of Northumberland, who writhed under the conviction that James had deceived him*, and to John Wright, a recent convert to Popery, and of course peculiarly obnoxious

* It was he who contended that the Papists had their negotiation with James, while yet in Edinburgh; and who asserted that the king of Scots had promised to afford them a free exercise of their religion, provided they would assist in securing his succession. James denied, and there is no ground on which to distrust his denial, that any such pledge had been given; but it is certain that a large proportion of the Catholics favoured him, and assigned this as their reason for doing so.

to persecution. He had barely mastered their prejudices against an act so atrocious, when Winter and Fawkes arrived, and the whole received the sacrament from the hands of father Gerard, a Jesuit missionary, in pledge of their fidelity one towards another. Still the conspirators lingered, as men are apt to do on the brink of so foul a precipice, hoping that some accident might yet occur, which should relieve them from the terrible obligation into which they had entered. But when weeks and months passed away, and the persecution continued unabated, and Spain, after a cold remonstrance, gave them up to the mercy of their rulers, the associates, abandoning all hope except in their own exertions, determined at every hazard to proceed. They exhorted one another to sacrifice their lives, like the Maccabees of old, for the deliverance of their brethren, and pronounced it a lawful retribution to bury the authors of their wrongs amid the ruins of that house, in which laws so iniquitous had been enacted.

There was an empty house, with a garden annexed to it, contiguous to the old palace of Westminster, which they found, upon examination, to be well adapted to their purposes. They hired it in Percy's name, and began immediately to dig through the garden-wall into a dilapidated building which abutted upon the parliament-house. Never did captives, toiling for deliverance from bondage, display greater zeal or patience. They divided the day into three portions, each consisting of eight hours, and devoting two of these to labour, and one to rest,—they took it by turns to sleep and to work,—either in forcing a passage through the wall, which proved to be three yards in thickness, or in burying the rubbish under the soil of the garden. But while their task was yet incomplete, (they began on the 1st of December, 1604,) they learned that the parliament, which had been summoned for February, was prorogued till the third of October, and they imme-

diately broke up, with the design of spending the Christmas holidays at their respective homes,—without holding the slightest communication, by letter or message, one with the other.

While they were in this state Catesby took advantage of a commission granted to him by the king, and began to prepare men, horses, and arms, as if for future service. He applied likewise to Garnet, the head of the Jesuits in England, to confirm the wavering resolution of his associates, and by putting to him hypothetical questions, drew forth such answers as set their reviving scruples to sleep. This was followed by the communication of the design to other parties; among whom were Butts, a confidential servant of Catesby, who was employed to convey arms into Worcestershire; Keys, a man of great resolution, and desperate from the loss of his property; Grant, the owner of a house at Norbrook, which lay conveniently for their future operations; and Ambrose Rookwood, of Stanningfield in Suffolk, who could furnish a valuable stud of horses. Nor was this all. The conspirators, having resumed their labours, were one day alarmed by a noise which appeared to proceed from some room immediately over their heads, and they ascertained, on inquiry, that there was a vaulted cellar beneath the House of Lords, which was at that critical moment offered for hire. Percy became, without loss of time, the nominal tenant; and into it was conveyed the gunpowder, with which it had been proposed to load a mine, already carried to a partial degree through the garden-wall, and under the foundations of the upper house of parliament.

It is very difficult, amid the conflicting evidence which the spirit of party has handed down to us, to determine how far the schemes of this handful of desperate men were or were not communicated to the head of the Roman Catholic church. A consideration of the extreme peril of the enterprise, and of the scanty

means with which it was proposed to be carried forward, would lead us, independently of all moral considerations, to reject so heavy a charge against the See of Rome; but however this may be, it is certain that Guy Fawkes was despatched, during the summer, to Flanders; and that, besides holding frequent and confidential correspondence with some of the leading members of the society of Jesus, he exerted himself to establish a *depôt* of arms and military stores, at a point within easy sail of the English coast. This done, he returned to his confederates; not, however, without having excited the suspicion of the vigilant Cecil; and found them preparing the means of action by a further extension of their confidence, and the secret enrolment of troops. But just at this moment the hopes of all were unexpectedly darkened, by the appearance of a royal proclamation, which extended the prorogation of parliament from October to the fifth day of November. Great, indeed, was the alarm excited by this casual circumstance; nor was it removed till Winter, by closely watching the conduct of the commissioners, had ascertained that they met above the mine, with the perfect coolness of men altogether unaware of the proximity of danger.

Hitherto the expenses of the conspiracy (and they were both numerous and heavy) had been exclusively defrayed by Catesby. His coadjutors were all men of broken fortunes,—and his enthusiasm was such that he cheerfully devoted his property, as he risked his life, to the cause in which he had embarked. Now, however, funds began to fail, and it became necessary to solicit the aid of persons capable of supplying them, even at the risk of extending his secret beyond the limits which prudence might dictate. In this emergency he opened his mind to two individuals, sir Everard Digby, of Drystoke in Rutlandshire, a youth of one-and-twenty, and Francis Tresham, of Rushton in

Northamptonshire, a man of maturer years, and still more extensive means. Over the mind of Digby he soon acquired an ascendancy. Fifteen hundred pounds were obtained from him, as well as an assurance that men and horses should be forthcoming in the hour of need; but Tresham, though he advanced not less than two thousand pounds, seems to have regarded the enterprise, from the first, with strong misgivings, if not with a more hostile feeling. Still Catesby's affairs were desperate. He had taken with these the same precautions which he took with the rest, by swearing them at the altar to secrecy and good faith; and stifling, as he best could, the distrust which in spite of himself arose in his own mind, he went forward with his undertaking.

The middle of October had now arrived, and all things appeared to indicate that, whatever suspicions might attach to the persons of some of the conspirators, the nature of their design had not yet transpired. They met, therefore, with considerable confidence, to make their final arrangements for the destruction of the king, the queen, prince Henry, the heir apparent to the throne, and all the chief of the nobility and gentry of England. After some debate, it was agreed that certain popish lords ought to be spared, and a list was made out of such as it might be advisable to warn, in order that they might absent themselves from the devoted assembly. The next matter to be arranged was the distribution of the several parts which the different conspirators were to perform. To Fawkes was assigned the task of firing the train; to Percy, the care of seizing the young prince Charles. Dunchurch in Warwickshire was named as the point of general rendezvous; whence Digby, Tresham, Grant, and their associates, were to proceed to the house of lord Harrington, and possess themselves of the infant princess Elizabeth. Meanwhile Catesby undertook to proclaim the heir apparent at Charing Cross,—and to issue a

declaration against monopolies, purveyances, and wardships. Last of all, it was resolved to appoint a regent, who should administer the royal authority during the nonage; though the name of the individual, whom it was proposed to advance to so perilous a dignity, was not permitted to transpire.

I have alluded to Tresham as displaying, from the first, strong symptoms of dissatisfaction with the conspiracy. As the moment of action drew near, his uneasiness became more and more perceptible, and he proposed a suspension of the project, on various grounds, at least till the close of the session. This was done after his associates had declared themselves averse to include lord Monteagle, who had married his sister, among the number of those whom it would be desirable to spare. But Catesby, though he judged it expedient to dissemble with the doubter, so far as might be done by an affected acquiescence in his wishes, never for a moment relaxed in his own exertions, or withdrew his own eyes from the goal that was before them. It is hard to say whether Tresham was deceived or not. Probably he was not deceived; but however this might be, the events of a few days gave proof that either he, or some one else, privy to the whole affair, was resolved to save lord Monteagle at all hazards. That nobleman, contrary to his usual custom, had withdrawn to a country house, and was at supper with a few friends, when a letter was handed to him by a servant, which had been delivered in by a tall man, closely wrapped up in a cloak. Monteagle requested one of the gentlemen who waited upon him to read it aloud; and it ran thus:—

“My lord, out of the love I have to some of your friends, I have a care of your preservation, therefore I would advise you, as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift off your attendance at this parliament, for God and man hath concurred to punish the wickedness of this time; and think not slightly of this

advertisement, but retire yourself into your country, where you may expect the event in safety; for though there be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow this parliament, and yet they shall not see who hurts them. This counsel is not to be contemned, because it may do you good and can do you no harm, for the danger is passed as soon as you have burned the letter, and I hope God will give you the grace to make good use of it; to whose holy protection I commend you.”

This strange and incoherent epistle, to which neither date nor signature was attached, was laid, by lord Monteagle, before the minister, by whom, after some time spent in a vain effort to discover its import, it was communicated to the king. The latter, whose natural timidity was, perhaps, quickened by the recollection of his father's fate, pronounced that the threatened blow could come only from an explosion of gunpowder. His opinion being adopted by the members of the council, preparations were made to investigate the matter more closely. It is a remarkable fact,—if, indeed, the occurrence can be regarded as accidental, that the conspirators were not left in ignorance of these proceedings. Soon after the letter had been put into the king's hands, the same gentleman who read it at lord Monteagle's table, informed Winter of what had happened,—while Tresham, so early as the first of November, assured his associates that their plot was discovered, and its success impossible. As may be imagined, such warnings, coming from such quarters, excited among them some alarm, yet they resolved to go on. A few alterations were, indeed, made in the casting of the several parts which they had undertaken to play; for Fawkes now posted himself as a guard within the cellar; Percy and Winter undertook to superintend the operations in London, while Catesby and Wright departed for the general rendezvous in

Warwickshire. But willing to be convinced by Percy's arguments, that Tresham only feigned what he feared, they refused to seek safety in flight. They had staked their lives upon the hazard of the die, and they resolved to abide the throw.

On the fourth of November the members of the conspiracy repaired to the stations which had been severally allotted to them. They met with no interruption, nor discerned any cause of alarm, till towards the evening of that day, when Fawkes, who kept watch in the cellar, found himself suddenly confronted by the Lord Chamberlain, who, with lord Montague, had, according to custom, inspected the preparations which were made to receive the parliament. Little conversation passed between them, for the nobles took no further notice of Fawkes than to question him as to the proprietor of the fuel, over which he seemed to keep guard. Yet even that, slight as it was, would have excited extremely uneasy sensations in any man, whose nerves were not cast in an iron mould, like those of the conspirator. It would appear, indeed, that even Fawkes's heart misgave him for a moment,—at all events, it is certain that he sought out Percy, to whom he made a report of what had occurred. But reassured by the lofty bearing of his confederate, he immediately returned to his post; and made ready, in the event of any accident occurring, to fire the train at once, and perish together with his enemies. Such was his determination, when about two o'clock on the morning of the fifth, he judged it prudent to visit the magazine, for the purpose of ascertaining that all was in order. He had applied the key to the lock with this view, when a body of soldiers, at the head of whom was sir Thomas Knevet, suddenly rushed upon him, and as he could not lay his hand on his sword, or offer the smallest resistance, overpowered and disarmed him. The whole device was forthwith laid bare. Behind the door stood a dark

lantern, which contained a lighted taper; trains were laid along the floor to communicate with the fuel, and beneath the fuel were concealed two hogsheads and thirty-two barrels of gunpowder. Finally, in the pockets of the prisoner himself,—who was ready cloaked and booted for a journey,—were discovered three slow-matches, concerning his mode of using which no one could entertain a doubt.

Early as it was, the king had already risen, and at four o'clock the prisoner was brought for interrogation before him and the council. Nothing daunted by their presence the prisoner behaved with the same unbending resolution which had characterized him throughout the conspiracy. He gave his name as Johnson, stated that he belonged to Percy, avowed his design to destroy the parliament, but positively refused to say whether he had any confederates. Even the rack, which, on his removal to the Tower, was applied, failed to wring from him a confession, till the confederates, by appearing in arms, rendered further concealment useless. The truth, indeed, is, that intelligence of Fawkes's capture was not slow in reaching those members of the plot whose business it was to remain in London. They instantly took arms and hastened down to Dunchurch, where, under the pretext of a hunting-party, Digby had drawn together a numerous body of his friends and adherents. But the dejection displayed in their countenances, and the long and secret conference which they held with their host, soon caused an alarm of disappointed treason to arise. One by one the guests stole away, till the leaders of the conspiracy were deserted by all, except a handful of attendants,—who swelled their total strength to about eighty persons. With these, who were well armed and mounted, they boldly took the field. As it was useless now to seize the person of the princess, they thought only of increasing their numbers; and rode with this view, through the

counties of Warwick and Worcester. But to their indescribable chagrin not a Roman Catholic joined them, while the sheriffs followed whithersoever they went, with the whole array of the counties. Under these circumstances it was resolved to make one effort more, and in the event of a failure to perish. At Holbeach, the pursuers closed upon them, but, as they consisted of a disorderly crowd, it was considered not impossible to defeat them by a sudden attack; and it was justly argued, that even such a victory, if it failed to accomplish anything further, would, at all events, secure a retreat for themselves beyond sea. As if fate, however, had determined to thwart them in all their undertakings, even their magazine of gunpowder became accidentally ignited, and, besides stripping them of the last means of efficient resistance, maimed a number of their chiefs, so that they were totally incapable of exertion. Now, then, to die like men seemed the only alternative left. Those who had escaped the explosion threw open the gates, and rushed out, sword in hand, only that they might be mowed down by the bullets of their enemies, who fired upon them in comparative security. Percy and Catesby fell covered with wounds; Digby, Rookwood, Winter, and others, were taken; and all, as well as Garnet the Jesuit, died upon the scaffold, not only confessing their crime, but making a boast of it.

It was not, perhaps, unnatural in the Protestant people of England, to attach a portion of the guilt of a purely Popish conspiracy to the whole body of Papists throughout the kingdom. The king, on the other hand, would have willingly confined his censures to a few men of rank, whose peculiar circumstances appeared to connect them, in some degree, either with the conspirators or their design. The earl of Northumberland, for example, being a relative of Percy, was fined to the amount of thirty thousand pounds, and imprisoned in

the Tower. The lords Mordaunt, Stourton, and Montague, having been convicted of a design to absent themselves from the meeting of parliament, were amerced in lesser sums. But these acts, though sufficiently arbitrary, fell far short of the people's expectations. When the parliament met, James recommended to his commons to forget, as he already did, the violence which had been offered to them. The commons, on the other hand, proceeded to pass bills more and more severe against the professors of Popery. A new oath of abjuration was invented; new penalties were attached to recusancy; and new powers afforded to magistrates, and even to constables, for discovering and bringing to justice inveterate delinquents. To James, whose natural disposition was lenient, and who would have willingly stood well, had it been possible to do so, even with the court of Rome, these enactments proved the reverse of palatable. Nevertheless he was compelled to go with the stream; and as, in due time, he entered the lists as a controversialist in defence of the oath to which he had assented, it excites no surprise to discover that his zeal became, by degrees, more ardent, and his proceedings more arbitrary.

The domestic annals of England, during the interval between the years 1606, and 1617, present us with little else than a detail of the follies and extravagancies of a profuse and profligate court, and of a series of struggles which were incessantly carried on between the crown and the House of Commons, on the subject of their mutual privileges. James, a weak, though doubtless a learned prince, appears to have been constantly under the guidance of some favourite, whose talents and experience were rarely such as to justify the confidence reposed in him. An agreeable person, a taste for pageants and shows, a pert manner, even though displayed towards himself, were qualities which the king of England knew not how to resist; and hence,

while his council abounded with wise and able statesmen, his own proceedings were rarely distinguished by any show of political wisdom. Among such favourites there were two, of whom, by reason of the influence which they exercised over the management of public affairs, it is necessary to take notice. The first was a Scotchman, by name Robert Carre, a youth of good family, but poor, whom the accidental fracture of his leg by the fall of his horse, during a tournament, introduced to the king's notice. Him James, after tending him as a father would a son, during his confinement, and personally instructing him in letters, and "the craft of statesmanship," advanced successively to the honours of knighthood, of the peerage, and of a privy councillor. He became, in short, the dispenser of all royal favours, and the pole-star by which the courtiers steered their course; and, in justice to the object of so much extravagant fondness, it must be acknowledged, that for a while, at least, his conduct lay open to slight censure. But an unfortunate attachment to the young lady Essex, which was unfortunately returned, led him into crimes each more heinous than the other. His first offence was an intrigue with this beautiful but giddy woman; his next, the procuring a divorce between the adulteress and her husband, and then taking her to wife. So far he did nothing which could injure him in the eyes of his master, or seriously affect his reputation among a body of corrupt courtiers; but the third crime laid to his charge could not be overlooked. Sir Thomas Overbury, an unprincipled but able man, had been his confidant in the beginning of this affair, though he strenuously dissuaded him from a marriage with the partner of his crime. Carre, now earl of Somerset, was weak enough to inform his wife of the matter, and Overbury being thrown into prison, died there, as was alleged, of poison. It was but natural that suspicion should attach to the Somersets.

who were put upon their trial. They were found guilty; she, upon her own confession, he, on presumptive evidence, and they were both condemned to die. But James could not bring himself to command the execution of one whom he had once trusted. The miserable pair, after a long confinement in the Tower, were released, and spent the remainder of their days in obscurity and mutual hate; subsisting on a pension which they received from James's bounty.

The other favourite was George Villiers, a man of very different temperament; equally attractive in his personal appearance, but far more ambitious, more haughty, more wayward, and more passionate. He had attained the age of one-and-twenty, and was just returned from foreign travel, when at the critical moment of Somerset's disgrace, he attracted the king's notice. All the affection which Carre had forfeited was instantly lavished upon him. He became viscount Villiers; earl, marquess, and at length, duke of Buckingham, master of the horse, chief-justice in Eyre, warden of the cinque ports, master of the king's bench, constable of Windsor, and lord high admiral of England. But these dignities, though they carried with them great weight, added little to the power of a man who ruled his prince with a despotic authority, and bent him to all his humours. Even Bacon, the great luminary of his age, was fain to seek in the headstrong favourite, a patron and protector,—while over Charles, whom the death of his elder brother, in 1611, advanced to the station of heir-apparent, he cast a spell not less potent than that by which he governed the king.

Under the tutelage of such a guide, we cannot be surprised to find that all the natural foibles of the monarch were fostered and increased. James abhorred business, and Buckingham encouraged him in avoiding it. Four days in the week were dedicated to cock-fighting; and of the remainder, almost all were

spent in hunting or hawking. In the evenings, moreover, the pleasures of the table were carried to the greatest excess, insomuch that even among the ladies, intoxication was no rare occurrence. Then again, in processions, in shows, in tournaments, and combats of beasts, not only much time, but a great deal of money was wasted; while the king, when remonstrated with, did not hesitate to declare, that in accepting the English crown, he had no intention to make himself a slave. "I will rather," said he, "go back to my own country, than be confined all day to my closet, or chained to the council-board."

It is extremely probable that a contemplation of the king's personal misconduct may have encouraged the commons to carry forward those attacks on the royal prerogative, which began in the first session after his accession, and which his ill-expressed anger never sufficed to restrain. His profusion, indeed, by rendering him always poor, exposed him to continual mortifications; for the parliament positively refused to grant any supply unless it were purchased by some concession. Thus harassed by the pressure of his necessities on the one hand, and by the parsimonious and encroaching temper of the legislature on the other, James, after dissolving the parliament, made an effort to raise a revenue without its assistance. I have had occasion more than once, to allude to duties on certain descriptions of goods, such as wool, wool-fells, leather, wine, &c.; which, when imported from abroad, or shipped for a foreign market, the kings of England were accustomed to levy. That this custom originated in a legislative arrangement there is little reason to doubt; for during many ages, it had been regarded as a privilege attached to the crown; and from the reign of Henry the Fifth, when the matter came to be regulated, and the tax obtained the appellation of Tonnage and Poundage, the first parliament which met at the

commencement of each new reign, was in the habit of settling it upon the sovereign during his life-time.

In this respect, James had not been treated differently from his predecessors. The statute of Tonnage and Poundage secured to him a small revenue, which rose or fell according to the state of foreign trade; and so long as he entertained the faintest prospect of being able to meet his difficulties by such means, he was content with it. But it now occurred to him, that without infringing upon the constitutional rights of the legislature, he might render this their admitted gift more valuable. The amount of duty to be paid on each cargo was originally fixed at a per centage on its value. Such per centage was then considerable, but the great influx of the precious metals into Europe, which ensued upon the discovery of America, had reduced it, in latter times, to the merest trifle. James issued a proclamation, by which merchants and others were warned that tonnage and poundage would be exacted in the spirit of the statute which legalized the impost. As a matter of course, the traders loudly complained, some going so far as to resist the demands of the revenue-officers; but the question being brought before the judges in the court of exchequer, it was given, in spite of Coke's opposition, in the king's favour. The event proved that the funds thus obtained at the sacrifice of public favour were not equal to the cost: but James did not stop here. He revived the feudal custom of exacting a benevolence to defray the expenses of conferring knighthood on his son; and even went so far as to obtain, by a commission under the great seal, that which had long been deemed a compulsory loan. Not all of these expedients, however, sufficed to deliver him from his embarrassments; and, in 1610, he was compelled, though sorely against his will, to issue writs for the meeting of a new parliament.

While the king thus governed alone, an event befell,

of which some notice deserves to be taken, chiefly because it resembled, in many respects, certain occurrences of a more modern date. In the year 1607, the peace of the counties of Northampton, Warwick, and Leicester, was disturbed by the mutinous assemblage, in various parts, of bodies of labouring men. Armed only with hammers, saws, pickaxes, and other implements of husbandry, the malecontents began a furious attack upon all enclosures,—pulling down the fences, levelling brick walls, and filling up the ditches by which they were surrounded. Their cry was, that they found it impossible to earn a subsistence, in consequence of the extent to which the farms had been converted into grass-parks; and that it was better to die at once, than to see their wives and children starve before their faces. Wherever they went, the insurgents were well received by the populace, who, for the most part, joined them; and the only violence which they offered to the persons of such as remonstrated, was to force them into their ranks and compel them to work. Had not we ourselves witnessed like scenes, we should have doubtless marvelled to learn that these unarmed mobs struck the greatest panic into the minds of their superiors; and that they were not dispersed till the nobles put themselves at the head of their armed retainers, and executed upon some of the most forward, a severe military execution. Yet such was the case. A good many were cut down by the exasperated yeomanry, and a few of the ring-leaders, being made prisoners, suffered death at the hands of the executioner.

It is not worth while to particularize the proceedings of the parliament which met in the spring of 1610. In spite of an unexampled interference on the part of the court, for the purpose of swaying the elections in every part of the country, this House of Commons proved to the full as unmanageable as its predecessor; and neglecting the king's necessities, began at once with passing

resolutions condemnatory of all that had taken place during the recess. Not satisfied with this, the representatives of the people denounced feudal exactions as unsuited to the spirit of the times, and demanded the abolition of purveyance, and the exchange of every other kind of tenure into that of free and common soccage. These proceedings greatly enraged the king, whose indignation was not lessened by the presentment of a long list of grievances, of which the commons required the redress, as a preliminary to the consideration of any financial question. Without giving his ministers time to complete an arrangement which they had begun for the commutation, on favourable terms, of the burdens denounced, he suddenly dissolved the parliament; thus rendering it next to impossible to establish a good understanding between the crown and the people.

While he thus absurdly misdirected the influence which he still possessed in England, James was not forgetful of the condition both of Ireland and Scotland; in his dealings with the former country, displaying almost as much of sagacity as he exhibited folly and rashness in his management of the latter. Ireland had come to him, conquered, indeed, but not subdued; and though avowedly under the management of English laws, to all practical purposes, in a state of primitive barbarism. Revolts were continually breaking out; and, except in the immediate vicinity of the military stations, there was no safety for either property or life. James determined to put an end to this state of things. Having with difficulty subdued O'Dogherty and his confederates, and by forfeitures obtained possession of the whole province of Ulster, he devised a plan for rendering that which had formerly been the most savage, at once the most profitable and the best ordered district throughout the island. He divided the property into portions, of which none exceeded in amount 2000 acres, and allotted each to a tenant or owner, who was

required to reside. In this distribution, care was taken that the tracts least accessible should be occupied by emigrants from England or Scotland; while the open plains were distributed among the natives themselves. These were taught the arts of husbandry and manufacture, and being totally cut off from communication with their former leaders, became in due time an industrious and quiet race.

It was not, however, into Ulster alone, that James strove to introduce a taste for the habits of domestic life. Throughout all Ireland, he abolished customs which had been too long permitted to prevail; such as the Betroun law*, which set a price upon every man's life; the customs of Gavelkind and Tanistry, or hereditary chiefship. The people were everywhere declared to be free; the right of service, by which tenants held their lands, was commuted for a fixed rent in money, and the lands themselves, being assumed, on the plea that the titles were defective, were restored on such conditions as might prevent, for the future, all tyranny and oppression over the cultivators. These regulations, with the establishment of circuit courts, and the maintenance of a small but well-disciplined army, produced such astonishing changes in the condition of Ireland, that within nine years, greater advances were made towards its reformation than had been effected under English rule during the preceding period of four centuries and a half.

Very different, both in its progress and in its results, was James's policy towards Scotland. There, indeed, rapine and violence were comparatively little known; and the people, satisfied with institutions, doubtless, far from perfect, lived at peace among themselves; but there was one defect connected with this condition, which excited great uneasiness in the king's mind, and which he took the earliest opportunity to rectify. The

* An old Milesian law, similar to that of the Saxons, which rendered murder an offence against the family of the murdered party, not against the commonwealth.

Scots had carried the reformation of ecclesiastical abuses to an extreme. They had abolished Episcopacy, renounced the use of the surplice, and abjured all set forms of prayer in the celebration of public worship and the administration of the sacraments. The church, in fact, was constituted on the model of that of Geneva, and was governed by Presbyteries, Synods, and a General Assembly. Both on religious and political grounds, James stood opposed to this arrangement, and he laboured hard to effect a change. Being supported by a strong party, (for it was only to the south of the Tay that men conscientiously resisted the change), he succeeded in accomplishing the introduction of Episcopacy; which was conferred upon three clergymen, sent to England for the purpose, and by them communicated to their brethren. But his further efforts to establish chapters, and to place in the hands of the diocesans the same powers which were exercised by English bishops, met with a less cordial reception. Of the nobles, almost all had enriched themselves by the plunder of church property. They became apprehensive that restitution would be required, and they, accordingly, stimulated the ministers to denounce both this attempt and the introduction of a book of Common Prayer, as a meditated return to Popery. It is true, that James, by visiting Edinburgh in person, and displaying a disposition to punish, not less than to persuade, so far overcame the scruples of the General Assembly, that the new constitution was admitted: but he had scarcely returned to London, ere murmuring began to be heard, which it was found impracticable to silence, and not very easy to evade. Scotland endured its new form of church-government, no doubt: but the undue haste with which it had been erected was never forgiven; while the foundation was laid of many troubles, concerning which I shall have occasion to speak by and by.

All this while, England enjoyed a profound, if not a

dignified peace, with the continental nations; and James, who detested war, endeavoured to secure the continuance of tranquillity, by negotiating advantageous marriages for his children. On the 14th of February, 1613, his daughter Elizabeth, then a girl of sixteen years of age, was wedded to Frederick the elector palatine. The alliance, which was regarded by the people at large with especial favour, proved, indeed, eminently disastrous in its issue, by involving James in a quarrel which he possessed neither the energy nor the means to conduct aright; but as yet, no such results were anticipated from it, and the king carried forward another treaty, with a view to ensure the good-will of Spain, by a union between one of the Infantas and his son Charles. The latter negotiation, had, however, made little progress, when two occurrences befell, which, though widely different in kind, were almost equally calculated to throw impediments in the way of its accomplishment. I allude to a piratical expedition of which Raleigh took the command, and a quarrel in which the Palatine became unjustifiably involved with the house of Austria.

My reader will bear in mind, that Sir Walter Raleigh, having been convicted of high-treason, had lain a prisoner in the Tower, and under sentence of death, ever since the year of James's accession to the throne. But the Tower was at that time the residence of several enlightened persons, who strove to mitigate the horrors of imprisonment by the cultivation of literature; and Raleigh, influenced by their example, devoted the powers of his active mind to the composition of a work which has given him a high rank among the English authors of his age*. Even the pursuits of literature,

* Raleigh published many treatises, as well as some poetry of value; but his great work was the *History of the World*; of which the plan, the sentiments, and the diction, were his own, though the materials were supplied by his friends.

however, sufficed not to appease that longing after freedom to which all men, and especially men of Raleigh's temperament, are subject; and the captive, after repeatedly petitioning for a release, and being as repeatedly denied it, devised the following expedient to attain his object. During one of those exploratory voyages which Elizabeth encouraged him to undertake, Raleigh had discovered along the banks of the Oronooko, a tract of fertile and open country, where he was well received by the natives. On his return home, he spoke of this kingdom of Guiana, as abounding in gold; and of its chiefs as of princes far more civilized and wealthy than those whom the Spaniards had found in Mexico and Peru. Still he made no effort to colonize it; but now, when all other expedients failed, he revived this forgotten tale, and took care to add, that Guiana contained one gold-mine in particular, from which sufficient treasure might be dug to enrich, beyond all calculation, both the king and his subjects. James's wonder as well as his cupidity was excited. At the instigation of the minister, he consented to the equipment of a squadron which should be put under the orders of Raleigh; and Raleigh eventually quitted the Tower, as the commander of a fleet, with sentence of death still hanging over his head.

Between the period of Raleigh's former and his present voyage, the Spaniards had established a settlement on the Oronooko, to which they gave the name of Fort St. Thomas, and in which they placed a garrison. Their jealousy was excited by the rumour of this armament, and they obtained from James an assurance that no attempt would be made to encroach upon this or any other part of their Transatlantic dominions. But Raleigh, to whom the non-existence of the mine was well-known, no sooner reached the mouth of the river, than he forgot the pledge which he had given to his prince, and attacked St. Thomas, of which he obtained

possession, though at the sacrifice of his son's life. It was a rash, and to himself a fatal step. The place contained no valuable plunder to gratify the spoilers; his crews, indignant at the deception practised upon them, broke out into mutiny; they put him in irons, in his own ship, and brought him back a prisoner to England. Then followed a remonstrance from the Spanish ambassador, as well as a threat of retaliation, which James was too happy to avert by sacrificing a subject whom he never loved. Raleigh was not, indeed, tried for piracy, because the judges pronounced him already dead in law; but the sentence which had been pronounced upon him upwards of fifteen years ago, was carried into execution. He died with great courage, amid the general lamentations of all classes.

This trivial misunderstanding was scarcely explained away, when graver grounds of offence presented themselves, in the ill-advised acceptance by the Palatine, of the throne of Bohemia, which was offered to him by a body of rebels against the authority of the emperor. The rebels were, however, protestants, and had just cause of complaint; for the emperor was a zealot in his own religious opinions, as well as in his system of government; and hence the Palatine, misled by personal ambition, which he was willing to regard as a higher motive, did not presume, as a defender of the true faith, to reject the proffered dignity. Without consulting either his father-in-law or prince Maurice, the illustrious vindicator of the liberties and religion of the Low Countries, he marched an army into Bohemia, and proclaimed himself king. Without a moment's delay, Austria took up arms. She was supported by Poland, Saxony, and even by Spain, while Frederick saw no hope of assistance, except from the Low Countries and from England. But though the English people entered keenly into his quarrel, and clamoured for an armament, James refused to recognise his title. He could have done so only at the expense of a general war, and

the sacrifice of a Spanish alliance, with all its promised advantages, and James was too averse to the one, as well as too eager for the other, to put them in competition with the claims which his son-in-law brought forward. The consequence was, that the Palatine was not only driven from Bohemia, but became a fugitive in Holland, and a dependant on the bounty of strangers while James was soon made aware that the misfortune was attributed everywhere to his weakness; and that the remnant of favour which his subjects had hitherto retained for him, was totally dissipated.

Such was the temper of men's minds, when the pressure of his necessities compelled the king once more to summon a parliament. His first application was, of course, for a pecuniary supply, of which the House of Commons determined to postpone the consideration till they should have taken other matters, in their eyes much more important, under their notice. Their first measure was to attack all monopolies, and to impeach certain individuals by whom they had been enjoyed; the next, to convict the Lord Chancellor Bacon of accepting gifts from the suitors in chancery, and to drive him with disgrace from the public service. Had these steps, bold as they doubtless were, followed, instead of preceding the consideration of his private wishes, James would have probably thought lightly of them, as it was he took them grievously amiss, and prorogued the parliament. Nor did his vengeance end here.

He caused two of the most conspicuous among the popular orators, sir Edwin Sandys and sir Edward Coke, to be arrested; and repeatedly examined them on some secret charge, of which the purport was never revealed. The imprudent monarch gained little by this exercise of his power. A stern necessity compelled him again to meet the House of Commons, which he had doubly offended, and he was forced to assure them that the prosecution of the two parties related in no respect to

their conduct as members of the legislative body. Still the Commons refused to be satisfied. They ordered the serjeant-at-arms to take into custody the accusers of Sandys and Coke, and made no secret of their determination to push the inquiry to the utmost attainable limit. Then followed mutual recriminations and remonstrances, which served only to widen the breach, which was rendered irreparable by a reported preparation on the part of the Commons to remonstrate against any alliance between the heir of the English throne and a Catholic princess. James made haste to prevent the presentation of this most offensive petition. He hurried up to London, caused the journals of the house to be brought to him, tore out with his own hands certain obnoxious resolutions which had been entered, and first prorogued, and afterwards dissolved the rebellious parliament.

One of the chief inducements to the Spanish match lay in the promise of a rich dower with the bride, which would have relieved the king from at least the most harassing of the demands to which he was subject. The court of Madrid, however, seemed in no hurry to bring the negotiation to a point; and Charles, swayed by the counsels of the favourite, Buckingham, began to express great impatience. James went along with him in the feeling; and when the two young men proposed to set out "like knights-errant in disguise, and to urge the suit before the lady in person, by displaying their persons in Madrid," he would not for a while listen to the suggestion. Nevertheless, the entreaties of Charles, supported as they were by the petulance and ill-humour of Buckingham, prevailed. Without so much as laying the scheme before the privy-council, or seeking any other sanction than that of the king, Charles, with his profligate companion, set forth upon an adventure, to which he pleased himself with believing that since the best days of

chivalry no parallel could be found in the history of the royal families of Europe.

Sir Thomas Digby, Earl of Bristol, was at that time ambassador at Madrid, a man of sound judgment, great discretion, and very considerable talents as a diplomatist. He was surprised one day by the arrival at his house of two gentlemen, who sent in their names as John and Thomas Smith; and who, with less of ceremony than the manners of the times required, demanded an audience. They were admitted, and the ambassador instantly recognised the prince. The rumour soon got abroad that the heir-apparent to the English crown was arrived; and the king of Spain, with all his courtiers, flattered by the confidence thus reposed in them, hastened to pay to him their respects. As maybe imagined, the capital became forthwith a scene of constant gaiety and amusements. Tournaments, bull-fights, and other games, called forth the skill of the gallants, and delighted the multitude; while in private Charles was assiduous in his devotions to his intended bride, as well as prodigal of his pledges touching her future happiness. It had been early stipulated by the king of Spain, that his daughter should enjoy perfect freedom in the exercise of her religion, and that the children of the marriage should be committed to her guidance till they had attained their thirteenth year. Fresh articles, securing a toleration to all Catholics, were now brought forward, and though not inscribed in the public treaty, were admitted and acceded to in private. But a negotiation, which in spite of the habitual procrastination of Spanish diplomacy, and an artful delay on the part of the Pope to grant a dispensation, appeared at one period in a fair way of being brought to a satisfactory issue, the shameless profligacy, and the insolent familiarity of Buckingham, suddenly broke off. The grandees of Spain, a grave and haughty race, paid to the favourite less court than he conceived

to be his due; while the English ambassador made little effort to conceal his disapprobation of an interference as mischievous as it was ill-timed. The consequence was that Buckingham became disgusted with the court and the people; and, after inducing the prince to commit himself, even to the granting of a matrimonial proxy, declared all at once that he distrusted the issue. By and by, the two lords withdrew from Madrid, and at a moment when nothing less was expected there than the performance of the ceremony, a messenger arrived to announce that the prince had changed his mind, and that the treaty of marriage was at an end.

Such an insult was not likely to be borne with patience by any king, and least of all by a king of Spain. He began immediately to arm, while in England the prospect of a Spanish war was hailed with delight, and the man, by whose selfishness and vanity it had been brought about, was treated as a patriot. Even the parliament, which it was found necessary to assemble, appeared to forget for a while its jealousy of royal power in the contemplation of a contest from which, if vigorously conducted, the best results were expected to accrue, not to England alone, but to the whole of Protestant Europe. A sum of money was readily voted for the equipment of a fleet and an army. The king was urged to place himself at the head of a Protestant Crusade, of which it should be the object to bridle the ambition of the house of Austria; while at home he was requested to carry into their fullest force the penal laws against papists. Never was prince more sorely beset than James. Abhorring, perhaps dreading, war, he began his military preparations with the utmost possible degree of reluctance, while to the proposition for a renewal of persecution he gave a steady denial, which he vindicated by quoting the old adage, "that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." The unanimous wish of the nation, however,

supported by the advice of his son and the demands of Buckingham, overcame, in the former instance, his scruples. War was declared against Spain; though over the Papists at home the same shield of protection was held, which had hitherto defended them from the fury of the Puritans.

It formed a curious feature in the character of James, that in the very face of his own recorded sentiments*, his pride urged him to seek an alliance with one or other of the great, though Catholic, powers of Europe. The Spanish match was no sooner cast aside than negotiations were opened to complete one with France, and Charles was in due time engaged to the Princess Henrietta Maria, with whom he had danced at a ball in Paris, and to whom he had become attached. Meanwhile an expedition was fitted out, and six thousand men passed into Holland, who served with distinction under Prince Maurice in his campaign against Spinola. This was followed shortly afterwards by the assembling of a second army, which, to the amount of twelve thousand men, was committed to the guidance of Count Mansfeldt, one of the most distinguished commanders of the age in which he lived, and a bitter enemy to the emperor. It was the design of this armament to reconquer the Palatinate, and the king of France undertook to support it; but the troops were refused a landing at Calais under circumstances of peculiar cruelty, and driven to seek shelter in Zealand. A deadly distemper, occasioned by the scantiness and bad quality of their provisions, broke out among them, which swept off not fewer than five thousand, while the remainder were at once too much wasted, and too inconsiderable in point of numbers, to accomplish any thing. James deeply deplored this calamity, and was repeatedly heard to complain, that he who had passed his youth in the

* In his book, called *Doron Basilicon*, he laid it down as a rule, not to unite his son except to a Protestant princess.

cultivation of the arts of peace, should have been driven to make war in his old age. But he did not long survive it. Soon after the marriage of his son had been accomplished by proxy, and before the bride arrived in England, he was seized with a tertian ague, of which, on the twenty-seventh day of March, 1625, he died, in the twenty-third year of his reign, and fifty-seventh of his age.

James the First of England was one of those extraordinary mixtures of good and bad qualities, concerning whom it is difficult to speak, except in a series of paradoxes. Learned, even to pedantry, yet ignorant of the ways of the world; liberal to profusion, yet in many respects mean and parsimonious; kind-hearted, yet vindictive; jealous of his own authority, yet incapable of exercising it; he was ever anxious to secure the goodwill of all his neighbours, and ever liable, by some act of indiscretion, to incur their hatred. As a politician, he was at once arrogant and timid,—jealous of his prerogative, and fearful to enforce it. His wisdom, indeed, and he possessed much, was that of a counselor rather than of a sovereign; his talent, that of a philosopher, rather than of the head of a great nation. Perhaps, the temper of the age in which he lived was such as few princes would have been able to manage; for the love of liberty had grown up into a restlessness under all control, and institutions were become unpopular in exact proportion to their antiquity. But, however this may be, it is certain that his method of opposing the current only added to its force; and that the evils which he desired to assuage, became, after every palliative, more and more gigantic. He left, in short, a sad legacy behind him of dissension and mutual jealousy, of which his successor was doomed to witness the effects, in a very tragical manner.

The reign of James is memorable at home for the marked change which had taken place in the temper

of the public mind touching established usages; for the declining influence both of the crown and of the aristocracy, and the growing power of the people. For this various reasons may be assigned. The increase of knowledge consequent on the invention of printing, and a deliverance from the yoke of Popish thralldom, equally taught men to think, more than they had been accustomed to do, for themselves; while the more general diffusion of wealth, whether coming from an enlarged commerce, or from the extravagance of individuals, brought the different ranks in society more into collision, sometimes for good, sometimes for evil. Abroad, again, this period of our history is marked by the establishment of numerous colonies in North America, as well as by the increased importance of the English settlements both on the continent, and among the islands of India. It is true that Elizabeth gave a name to Virginia, and settled a feeble colony along its shores; and that under her a trade with the mighty empire of the Moguls was opened. But it remained for James, in despite of numerous reverses, to lay the foundation of that great republic, which after abiding, during two centuries, under the shadow of the English crown, now takes her place in the foremost rank of civilized nations.

As yet the military protection of England depended entirely upon a fleet, inconsiderable both as to the number and size of the ships; and on a militia, trained both imperfectly and at remote intervals to the use of arms. James had no other standing forces than he found it necessary to maintain for the defence of Ireland; while his guards consisted of the corps of gentlemen pensioners alone, of which Henry the Eighth was the founder. His revenues, indeed, which fell short of half a million, and arose partly from crown lands, partly from what would now be termed excise and customs, was wholly inadequate to the maintenance of a regular army, for his generosity was such as to keep him in

continual embarrassments; from which, as has been shown, his parliament relieved him sparingly and with reluctance. But James, as he was a pacific prince, so was he also a great patron of manufactures and commerce. Under him, the trade, particularly in wool, flourished exceedingly; and in the art of casting iron cannon England stood unrivalled.

We find that many persons, illustrious in the fields of literature and science, abounded at this time in England; and gave a character to the age. Shakspeare still lived; Ben Jonson wrote; the admirable Crichton astonished all Europe with the extent and variety of his accomplishments; Camden, Raleigh, and above all Lord Chancellor Bacon, the great rounder of the school of inductive philosophy, delighted and instructed their contemporaries. Casaubon, also, and Antonio de Dominis, both came by invitation to our shores, and both experienced the hospitality of the people, and the bounty of the sovereign. Nor, while enumerating some of the most distinguished authors of the day, ought we to forget James himself, whose erudition was undeniably of great extent, however faulty might be both his taste and his judgment. In like manner, considerable attention was paid to the art of agriculture, on which many sensible treatises were written; in-somuch, that in spite of the growing taste for enclosures, England became, for the first time since the Saxon conquest, an exporting country for corn. All these advantages, however, and if justly improved, they would have been found very great, were more than counter-balanced by a spirit of dark and daring fanaticism, which, passing from rank to rank, led, in a few years, to scenes of trouble and bloodshed, of which, in the next chapter, it will be my business to sketch an outline.



Great Seal of James the First

CHAPTER V.

CHARLES THE FIRST.—HIS DISPOSITION TOWARDS HIS PEOPLE.—STATE OF PARTIES.—DISSENSION BETWEEN HIM AND THE COMMONS.—THE PARLIAMENT DISSOLVED.—HIS ARBITRARY MEASURES.—EXPEDITION TO CADIZ.—A NEW PARLIAMENT UNMANAGEABLE.—EXPEDITION TO ROCHELLE.—PETITION OF RIGHTS.—DEATH OF BUCKINGHAM.—ATTACKS ON THE PREROGATIVE.—THE PARLIAMENT DISSOLVED.—ARCHBISHOP LAUD.—TROUBLES IN SCOTLAND.—THE KING UNABLE TO RESIST.—TRUCE WITH THE SCOTTISH ARMY.—THE TRUCE BROKEN.—THE KING AGAIN TAKES THE FIELD.—STILL INFERIOR TO THE INVADERS.—THE LONG PARLIAMENT.—DEATH OF STRAFFORD.—DECAY OF THE ROYAL INFLUENCE.—THE KING VISITS SCOTLAND.—IRISH REBELLION.—FRESH DEMANDS OF THE COMMONS.—TUMULTS AND SEDITIONS.—THE KING QUITS LONDON.—RETIRE TO YORK.—HOISTS HIS STANDARD.

[A. D. 1625 to A. D. 1642.]

ON the 27th of March, in the year 1625, a few hours after his father ceased to live, Charles the First was proclaimed at Temple-bar and Charing-cross, with the usual formalities. Perhaps no king of England ever assumed the reins of government with a more earnest desire to promote the welfare of his people, or a more sanguine expectation that he would receive from their representatives both a willing and an efficient support. He remembered with satisfaction the expressions of good-will which the Commons had recently lavished upon him, he flattered himself that these conveyed a just representation of the sentiments of those by whom they had been delivered; and he counted on a degree of popularity which would enable him to carry through, without difficulty, almost any measure which it might be necessary to bring forward. Charles little knew either the temper of the times, or the purposes of the men with whom he would be called upon to

deal. His impatience, therefore, to come in contact with the latter, proved to be such, that he was with difficulty restrained from calling the old parliament together; and he accounted it a serious misfortune, that after issuing writs for the assembly of a new parliament on the 7th of May, the festivities incident on the arrival of his bride from Paris hindered him from opening the session till the 18th of June.

It is probable that the court, had it interfered to influence the elections at all, would have met, on this occasion, with very little success. For the space of nearly forty years, however frequently the persons of the members of the House of Commons might have changed, the spirit which guided the public conduct of the body itself continued uniformly the same, a conclusive proof that a certain set of principles had taken deep root in the minds of the electors, and that those alone who professed similar opinions could hope for support at the hustings. Charles, however, entertained no suspicion that any change either of men or of principles was necessary. He desired nothing more than that he might be met by a new parliament, actuated by the same sentiments which he had witnessed in its predecessor; and he was so inexperienced, as to imagine that he should be able, in this case, by a little management and address, to control its wayward humours, and guide them to his own purposes. How totally he mistook the nature of the position in which he stood, the following brief analysis of the state of parties will suffice to demonstrate.

From the era of James's accession, if not from a still earlier date, the lower house of parliament had been divided into three principal factions; two of which, though on grounds somewhat dissimilar, offered a steady and uncompromising opposition to the third. The Puritans in religion constituted one of these factions; a bold and enthusiastic band, who austere to them-

selves and intolerant to others, sought to reform both church and state according to their own peculiar notions of scriptural doctrine and scriptural practice. The phantom which continually haunted their imaginations was Popery. They beheld it in the gaities and festivities of the court,—in the relaxations and amusements of rustic life,—in the distinctions of rank, in the hierarchy, in the vestments of the clergy, in all the ceremonies of the established church. Their fearless denunciations of customs sanctioned by law, obtained for them no little credit with the people; who, taught by the events of former reigns to prefer principle to precedent, gave every one credit for meaning well, who set himself in opposition to established usages. The Puritan party was one which gained continual accessions of strength, in consequence of the appearance of self-denial under which its designs were shrouded; but it may admit of a question whether all its efforts would have availed seriously to clog the wheels of government, had they not been aided by the exertions of allies, who, seeking an end at once more rational and more easy of attainment, made of their more zealous brethren, mere tools, while they appeared to treat them as guides and leaders.

The allies in question, forming another of the three factions alluded to above, composed what was termed in the language of the day, the Country Party, and consisted of men not more eminent for their talents and acquirements, than for their devoted attachment to the cause of civil liberty. Were to I describe these persons as mere lovers of anarchy—or as men who desired to advance their own interests, no matter on what terms, I should do great injustice to the characters of the majority. Some such there doubtless were among them, but by far the greater proportion were men, who had awakened to a sense of what was due from the ruler to the subject, and who were resolved

to extend the liberties of the people, by contracting to the utmost the prerogatives of the crown. It was this party which early discovered that the real strength of the popular branch of the legislature consisted in the control of the public purse, and came to the resolution of opposing every grant of money to the sovereign, which was not purchased by the abolition of some national grievance, or the renunciation of some arbitrary and oppressive claim.

The third party was made up of the adherents of the court, and of a certain number of country gentlemen, who, educated in high notions of loyalty, could not separate the respect which they owed to the crown from an absolute submission to the will of him who wore it. At first, the loyalists seem to have maintained the contest with their opponents on something like equal terms. As time passed, however, and the electors became more and more influenced by the love of civil and religious liberty, the court-party lost ground; till, towards the close of James's reign, they found themselves reduced to comparative helplessness, because beaten on almost every question of real importance. In this emergency they adopted a device, which is often practised under similar circumstances; and which, as it never deceives any one, so it tends only to diminish the influence by lowering the characters of such as fall into it. They pretended to an extraordinary degree of candour. They affected to give their adversaries credit for the purest principles and the most upright intentions; declaring that the sole difference between them lay not in the objects sought, but in the methods which each recommended in the prosecution of these objects. Now, as no one to whom they expressed these sentiments believed that they were sincere, the courtiers utterly failed to soften the rancour or to lull to sleep the vigilance of their enemies. They succeeded only in disheartening the

much of toleration as might be compatible with the interests of the realm, to the professors of their faith. No request could therefore be proposed to him more embarrassing or more distasteful; yet he conquered his chagrin, returned a gracious answer to the Commons, and renewed, with the same modesty as at first, his application for a pecuniary supply.

The king's business might be urgent, and the honour of the nation at hazard,—nevertheless, there was a matter which, in the estimation of the more zealous members of the lower house, demanded the consideration of the legislature in precedence of either. Dr. Montague, one of the royal chaplains, had ventured, while engaged in a controversy with a Popish missionary, to deny that the Calvinistic interpretation of the doctrines of Election and Reprobation were held to be correct by the Church of England. Great, indeed, was the ferment which this avowal occasioned among the Puritans. Yates and Ward, two of their most distinguished preachers, prepared an information against him, to be laid before parliament; and the unfortunate divine having ventured “to appeal unto Cæsar,” was pronounced guilty of a contempt of the house. It was to no purpose that Charles interfered to protect his chaplain, or requested that to himself might be intrusted the care of punishing the delinquent. The Commons continued obstinate, and Montague, who was already in charge of the serjeant-at-arms, would have been transferred to the Tower, had he not put in bail for his appearance, when required, to the amount of two thousand pounds.

Charles bore with these insults as patiently as he could, in expectation that now at length his necessities would be considered, and that funds would be supplied for the equipment of the navy, as well as for other purposes connected with the foreign relations of the country. His estimates of the probable cost of pre-

paring a fleet for sea, amounted to 300,000 pounds. The Commons voted for the total expenses of the war, something less than one half of the sum. Nor did they end here. Instead of granting to Charles for life, as had been done to his predecessors, the usual revenues accruing from Tonnage and Poundage, they passed a resolution that he should be authorized to levy them for one year only; thus indicating a determination to hold him altogether at their mercy, by making him dependent upon their votes for the very means of subsistence. The king received these announcements with surprise and indignation. He gave time only for the House of Lords to reject the bills, and then availing himself of the rapid progress of the plague, adjourned the session, by commanding the parliament to meet again, after a short recess, in the city of Oxford.

On the first of August, the parliament again met under auspices in no degree more favourable, than had attended it in London. The Commons refused to add to their former grants, or make a miserable subsidy of 40,000*l.*; while the opposite party wasted their time and ruffled their tempers in angry debate and mutual recrimination. Charles bore all this with difficulty, inasmuch as his own private dealings with the Papists afforded the principal topic of discussion; but the measure of his displeasure was filled to overflowing, when Buckingham became the object of attack. The favourite having undertaken, in a conference between the two houses, to explain the cause of the embarrassment under which his master laboured, found himself suddenly exposed to the fury of the very men whom he vainly hoped to propitiate. He made a report of what had passed to the king; and the king, in a transport of rage, dissolved the parliament.

Charles had been educated in very extravagant notions of the extent of kingly power. He bore, therefore, with an ill grace, these encroachments upon

not to produce an effect at the moment, and which were long afterwards remembered, when evil days came, as having prognosticated their arrival. In the first place, the populace, when required to shout in token of their acceptance of Charles as king, either through accident or design remained silent. In the next place, and this was esteemed much more serious, the unction was administered behind a traverse, where it was seen by no one; and came from the hands of a prelate, concerning whose authority serious doubts were entertained. Archbishop Abbot, a few years previously, had accidentally killed a forester, while shooting at a buck. He was absolved, it is true, and by James's authority reinstated in his dignities and office; yet there were numbers who imagined that the stain of blood could not be erased, and that a churchman so defiled was for ever incapacitated from the discharge of at least episcopal duties.

Early in February, 1626, Charles met his second parliament, which gave immediate proof that it was actuated by the same disposition which had swayed its predecessor. The first measure of the Commons was to appoint various committees with authority to inquire into all abuses, both in the church and state. To the king's application for subsidies, an answer was returned, that the Commons would cheerfully comply with his wishes, so soon as they had received a favourable reply to the prayer which they were about to present for the redress of grievances. The king's pride took fire, and he threatened the House with his displeasure, but the House not only took no notice of the menace, but resolved to impeach Buckingham. It indicated a grievous want of discretion in Charles, that he should have selected a moment so unpropitious as this to involve himself with the House of Lords; a body which, if it had not openly supported him, at all events preserved a steady neutrality in his contest with the

Commons. Such, however, was the case. The son of the earl of Arundel, lord high marshal of England, had presumed to marry without receiving a license from the king. For this offence lord Arundel was committed to the Tower; and Charles was weak enough to imagine that he had won an easy victory, because Arundel was opposed to the government, and carried six proxies in his pocket. Both the king and his advisers had, however, mistaken the temper of the House of Lords. They remonstrated against the imprisonment of one of their body, refused to proceed to business till he should be released, and compelled the court, though with a very bad grace, to recede from its intention. Yet this was not the only ground of offence which the king offered to his peers.

It will be borne in mind that, when Charles and Buckingham took their romantic journey into Spain, the earl of Bristol was ambassador at Madrid. Pursuing a different policy from that of the favourite, Bristol soon fell into disgrace, and had resided, ever since his return, at a house in the country. The king, at Buckingham's suggestion, omitted to send a writ to this nobleman. Bristol complained to the lords, and a writ was sent, though accompanied with a command from the king that he should not attend in his place. Again the insulted nobleman laid the case before his peers, who pronounced it a grievous breach of privilege; and Bristol took his seat in defiance of the royal prohibition. Nothing would now satisfy the rage of Buckingham, except that a charge of high-treason should be advanced against his enemy, which was immediately retorted by a similar charge on the part of Bristol against Buckingham. But before the complaints of either could be duly investigated, a new scene in this curious drama opened, by the impeachment of Buckingham, at the instance of the Commons of England, of certain high crimes and misdemeanors.

The king, warned of the coming storm, had endeavoured to avert it by frequent messages and remonstrances. To these the Commons paid no heed, and they now conducted the prosecution with so much violence and want of delicacy, as to excite disgust even in the minds of the judges. On Charles, as may be imagined, an extraordinary impression was produced, when he learned that they not only accused Buckingham of administering poison to the late king, but insinuated that he had himself been cognizant of the deed. Without pausing to inquire how much of truth there might be in the rumour, he caused sir Dudley Digges and sir John Elliot to be arrested; and hastening to the House of Lords, called upon them to vindicate the character and privileges of their sovereign. It would be tedious to describe the acrimonious disputes which ensued on this proceeding. But the result of all was the release of the imprisoned members, and an assurance, from both houses, that they had never heard the insulting expressions, to which they were reproached as having given utterance.

There was now a total disruption of feeling and sentiment between the king and his parliament, which there needed but the occurrence of some accidental offence on either side to convert into hatred; nor was such offence slow in being given. While he yet laboured under the perils of an impeachment, the University of Cambridge, at the instigation of the king, elected the duke of Buckingham to be their chancellor. The Commons fired up at the act, they voted it an insult to the house, and in spite of a prohibition from the king himself, appointed a committee to inquire into the whole proceeding; but the king would not submit to what he considered this gross personal insult. He had received, not without pain, their denunciations of tonnage and poundage, and of the other arbitrary methods which had been adopted to raise supplies during

the recess; but he would not suffer them to question the integrity of those by whom his favourite had been advanced to a station of honour. After a vehement address, in which he strove to vindicate the character of Buckingham, and a contemptuous rejection of a reply, in which the Commons repeated the charges against the duke, and requested that he might be dismissed from the royal presence, Charles took the last step which it remained for him to take. To the prayer of the lords, that he would pause, even for a few days, he made answer, "No, not for one minute!" and immediately dissolved the parliament.

In the height of his disappointment the king had assured the Commons, that if they still persisted in refusing the supplies, of which he stood so much in need, it would become his duty, as sovereign of the realm, to "follow new counsels." Of what nature these counsels were, he immediately proceeded to give proof. Tonnage and poundage, though as yet unvoted at all, he caused his officers to levy with the most unsparing strictness. One commission was granted, to improve the value of crown-lands, by effecting sundry changes in the tenures by which they were held; another, to inquire into the arrears of penalties due from recusants, and to compound for them. Privy seals were issued for the loan of money from private persons. Towns and cities were assessed,—London to the amount of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds; and an impost, called ship-money, for which a precedent was found in the reign of Elizabeth, was levied upon all sea-ports, without distinction, for the equipment of a fleet.

As may be imagined, these harsh and impolitic proceedings occasioned a great ferment throughout the country,—which, however, sufficed neither to intimidate the king, nor to check the violence of his

counsels. Nay, when intelligence came in of the defeat of the king of Denmark, and of the imminent risk of extinction which Protestantism had incurred in Germany, Charles took advantage of the horror which his people expressed, to push the encroachments of the prerogative still further. Something had been said in the late session, of a vote of four subsidies, which the commons held out as a bait to tempt the court into concessions. Charles determined to collect the money, let the consequences be what they might; and having ascertained the precise amount to which individuals would have been liable, he gave orders to extract it from them, under the denomination of a loan. Nothing could be more unwise than this proceeding, which was carried forward, moreover, with such harshness, that the whole extent of the kingdom presented one wide scene of arbitrary exactions on the part of the government, and bitter complaint on the part of the people.

It might have been thought that Charles, thus embroiled both at home and abroad, had at least as much upon his hands as he could manage, and that he would have been careful not to provoke the hostility of a new enemy, till he had delivered himself from the pressure of the old. Buckingham, however, who never forgave the treatment of the French court, had long laboured to effect a breach between Charles and his brother-in-law, and now, under the pretext of supporting the Huguenots, who were again preparing to rebel, he succeeded in accomplishing his design. Orders were issued for the equipment of a fleet and army, of which the destination was kept a profound secret,—till, under the command of Buckingham, who desired eagerly to distinguish himself in the field, it appeared suddenly before Rochelle. The Rochellois, however, not being prepared for this mission, refused, though bigoted

Huguenots, to admit the allies within their walls; and Buckingham, in consequence, landed his troops on the island of Rhé. Here he obtained, at first, some advantages; but, being at once inexperienced and haughty, incapable and impatient of advice, he demonstrated, in a campaign of two months' continuance, that the single military qualification of which he was possessed, was personal courage. The wreck of the expedition returned to England, where matters were beginning every day to wear an aspect less and less encouraging.

To prepare for service the fleet and army which thus miserably failed in their application, Charles had expended all, and more than all, the proceeds of his late exactions. He could not venture again to have recourse to such measures; for the prisons were already full,—and men's minds appeared wound up to a pitch of determination, against which it would be useless to contend, except with force. Under such circumstances a privy council was held, and a resolution passed, that it had become absolutely indispensable to call another parliament. Charles assured his counsellors that if they anticipated any good from the measure they would find themselves deceived. Nevertheless, as they adhered to the recommendation, and gave a pledge, that in case the Commons should again display a spirit of contumacy, they would support the king in any measures, he reluctantly gave way. Writs were issued accordingly, and on the 17th of March, 1628, a parliament met, to which, though it verified the king's foresight, the people of England stand more deeply indebted than to any other which has ever assembled under royal authority.

That he might meet his commons with a better grace, Charles set at liberty almost all persons, who had been guilty of no other offence than resistance to the demands of his revenue officers. A large proportion of

these obtained seats in the new parliament,—and they repaired to it with minds resolutely bent to protect themselves and their posterity, in all time coming, from similar outrages. Nevertheless, as they found from the tenour of the king's opening speech, that he was in no humour to bear with patience any premature attacks upon the prerogative, they resolved to put a check upon their tempers, and to proceed with equal caution and address. They adhered to this resolution with wonderful firmness. Their first measure was to propose, without absolutely voting, a supply of five subsidies. This, which would have amounted to three hundred and fifty thousand pounds, appeared so alluring in the king's eyes, that, rather than incur the risk of having it withdrawn, he threw no impediments in the way of the searching inquiry which they began immediately to institute. Out of these inquiries sprang the famous "Petition of Right," which, when passed into a law, became, next to *Magna Charta*—if, indeed, it ought to be ranked next even to that,—the great palladium of an Englishman's liberty.

The Petition of Right, after enumerating sundry oppressions, to which, of late years, the people had been subject, prayed the king that he would sanction and give the force of law to four important resolutions. The first of these pronounced it illegal to molest by oaths, recognizances, or arrests, any persons refusing to advance money to the king, unless required to do so by act of parliament. By the second, all magistrates, judges, peace-officers, and others, were prohibited from committing any one to prison, against whom some specific charge should not be alleged; or to retain him there after due notice should be given of bail, and a writ of *Habeas Corpus* sued for and obtained. The practice of billeting soldiers upon private houses (an abuse of which, after the return of the troops from *Cadiz*, the government were guilty to a great extent)

was forbidden by the third and fourth articles. To give authority, by commission, to any persons to punish by summary process of martial law, offences committed by soldiers, marines, and their accomplices, such offences being cognizable in the usual courts of law, was declared contrary to the spirit of the English constitution, unjust, and illegal. Charles was confounded, when, in spite of the utmost opposition of the courtiers, this bill, which threatened to effect a total revolution in the government of England, passed both houses by large majorities. He did not venture openly to reject it; but he adopted an expedient which, while it failed to accomplish his purpose, excited not more of anger than of contempt among the sturdy commoners.

The Bill being presented to him with the formalities usual on such occasions, Charles, instead of the brief answer by which the king is accustomed to denote either approbation or dissent, caused the following sentence to be written under the petition, "The king willeth that right be done according to the laws and customs of the realm, and the statutes be put in due execution; that his subjects may have no cause to complain of any wrong or oppression contrary to their just rights and liberties, to the preservation whereof he holds himself as well obliged as of his prerogative." Nothing could exceed the indignation of the Patriots, who, retiring to their own chamber, gave vent to their fury in a manner which experience had taught them to consider as most galling to the royal temper. While pursuing his arbitrary career during the late dissolution, Charles had commanded the clergy to preach to its utmost limits the doctrine of passive obedience. They were not all obedient to this mandate; but one doctor Manwaring not only inculcated a slavish submission from the pulpit, but, by the king's desire, printed and published his sermon. He was now impeached by the Commons, condemned to acknowledge his error, to pay

a fine of a thousand pounds, to be suspended for three years, and declared incapable, ever after, of holding an ecclesiastical benefice. It is worthy of remark, that Manwaring was pardoned by the king, and, within a few months, presented to a rich living; and attained, eventually, to a seat upon the bench, as bishop of St. David's.

The attack upon Manwaring roused the king's anger; his fears became alarmed by a threatened renewal of the charges against Buckingham. He suddenly made up his mind to yield, after incurring all the odium of opposition, and calling the houses together, affixed to the bill the usual sentence, which gives to all bills the force of law. Loud shouts greeted this deed,—yet were they shouts rather of triumph than of gratitude; for the Commons had no sooner returned to their own house, than they began to follow up their victory with great ardour. Never has any body of men done more grievous wrong to their own fair fame, and to the peace of their country. The conquest which they had achieved was at once glorious and invaluable. They had wrung from the hands of an unwilling sovereign the liberty of themselves and of their offspring. By seeking more, they undid the holy work, and brought confusion, civil war, and military despotism upon the land.

By moderate men, it was hoped that the leaders of the popular party, content with what they had done, would spare the king any additional mortifications,—at least for the present. The expectation proved illusory; for, after several long debates, they presented to him a remonstrance, in which the evils which afflicted, and the dangers which threatened the kingdom, were eloquently set forth. Religion, it was said, was undermined by Popery and Arminianism; both the reputation and the resources of the country were thrown away, and its trade destroyed, by mismanagement. Of all these evils, the duke of Buckingham was the root and

the origin, and hence his dismissal from the royal confidence was earnestly solicited. When the king exhibited a disposition to resist their demands, they reminded him, with very little delicacy, that as yet no vote of Tonnage and Poundage had passed. Charles lost all patience. He summoned the houses into his presence, and from the throne assured them, that in consenting to the Petition of Rights, he had neither relinquished, nor intended to relinquish, any privilege which his predecessors had before possessed. "As for Tonnage and Poundage," continued he, "it is a thing I cannot want. It was never intended by you to ask, and never meant (I am sure) by me to grant." Having said this, he gave the royal assent to the bills of subsidy, and instantly prorogued the parliament.

If Charles expected to enjoy either leisure or relaxation by ridding himself of the presence of his impracticable counsellors, the event gave proof that he had totally miscalculated his situation. The people of Rochelle called loudly for further aid, and he sent a fleet to support them, which accomplished nothing. In this extremity, Buckingham, either weary of court-life, or anxious to retrieve his military reputation, solicited and obtained permission to undertake the guidance of a second expedition. He repaired to Portsmouth for that purpose, and had arranged all matters preparatory to a general embarkation, when he was stabbed to the heart, in open day, while descending the stairs of his hotel, in the midst of a crowd of attendants. The murderer proved to be one Felton, formerly a lieutenant under Buckingham's command, whose temper, naturally sour and gloomy, had been goaded into madness by the refusal of promotion. He made no secret of the act, in which, indeed, he seemed to glory; and as a justification of what he had done, quoted the terms of the address by which the House of Commons had denounced the favourite as a traitor even at the foot

of the throne. Felton suffered the penalty due to his crime with great composure, and denied, doubtless with truth, that he was either incited to the enterprise, or assisted in it by any accomplices.

Though the king disguised his feelings, over which he possessed, at all times, an extraordinary command, he was deeply affected by the assassination of the favourite. He did not, indeed, intermit his preparations to succour Rochelle, which, however, surrendered before effectual relief could be conveyed to it; and he never for a moment withdrew his most assiduous attention from the consideration of public business. But there came no successor to Buckingham, either in his confidence or his affections. In Laud he reposed great trust; Wentworth also, who had deserted the popular cause, and was created successively a baron, a viscount, and, finally, earl of Strafford, obtained a high place in his esteem; while Noy and Littleton equally gave in their adhesion, and were created, the former, attorney, and the latter solicitor-general. Nevertheless, Charles, though he valued as it deserved the advice of these able counsellors, became not in their hands the tool which he had been in the hands of Buckingham. He retained, on the contrary, his own opinions on all subjects; and was not slow to discover that the act of changing sides had lost to his new friends all the influence which they were at one period capable of exerting. Laud, also, as past experience had shown, lay, in a marked degree, open to the hostility of the Commons. His rapid promotion from dignity to dignity, till he attained at last to the primacy itself, gave almost as much umbrage as his known abhorrence of Calvinism and Non-conformity; while his indomitable courage, by removing all hope of influencing him by the motive of fear, served only to convert prejudice and distaste into rancorous hatred.

Such were the principal directors of the king's

counsels, when on the 30th of January, 1629, the parliament reassembled. As usual, Charles endeavoured to draw the attention of the Commons to his own pressing necessities; the Commons, as their custom was, had a thousand wrongs of which to complain. The religious Puritans exclaimed against the growth of sundry heresies, and inveighed with peculiar bitterness against what they were pleased to term the introduction of a new clause into the Articles,—a clause which was not new, but had from the first declared “that the Church hath power to discuss rites and ceremonies, and hath authority in matters of faith.” The country party, again, protested, and with much greater reason, against an act of which the king had been guilty, and concerning which it is impossible to speak, except as the deed of one whose judgment and sense of personal respect had entirely forsaken him. It appeared, that during the recess, fifteen hundred copies of the Petition of Rights had been printed and circulated through the country, with a transcript of the first reply which the king had made, appended to each. The Patriots were vehement in their condemnation of this deceit, which Charles made haste to rectify, and they testified their displeasure by condemning, as illegal, the levying of Tonnage and Poundage, which had not yet been constitutionally granted. It is worthy of remark, that in the session of 1629, Oliver Cromwell first began to make himself conspicuous. He was a member, and a zealous one, of the Committee of Religion, and directing much of his indignation against the patrons of doctor Manwaring, pronounced it disgraceful before men, and hateful in the sight of Heaven, that those should attain to ecclesiastical preferment who “preached flat popery.”

Unwilling to come to an open rupture, of which he felt that the consequences must necessarily be serious, Charles strove to soften the rancour of the country party, by conceding his right to levy Tonnage and

Poundage, except as a free gift from the people. The Commons, however, were in no humour to be pleased. They passed votes of censure against the officers of revenue, and summoned them to the bar of the house. It was in vain that the Speaker, acting at Charles's suggestion, strove to stop this headstrong proceeding, or asserted that he had it in command, as the question came on, to adjourn the house. A furious tumult arose. He was forcibly held in his chair,—the doors were locked, and certain violent resolutions were carried by acclamation. In the midst of the uproar, the king himself came to the door of the house, and was refused admission. He commanded it to be burst open. Happily, this last measure of violence was not necessary, inasmuch as the Commons had obeyed the mandate of the Speaker, and were then in the act of adjourning their debate; nevertheless, the king could not forgive the insult to which he had been subjected. He caused several of the most popular leaders to be arrested, and dissolved the parliament, with a threat, not obscurely delivered, that he should never expose himself to disgrace by meeting a similar body again.

Charles committed a grievous error in thus hastily committing to prison the leaders of the popular party, on a charge which could be interpreted as affecting their public conduct alone. They became at once, in the eyes of the nation, martyrs to the cause of liberty, of which the king, as a matter of course, was accounted the enemy. He was equally injudicious in the mode by which he strove to remedy the mistake. His first act excited the anger,—his second, the contempt of the people; and perhaps the latter is, when directed towards a sovereign, the more perilous feeling of the two. He had, however, taken his ground, and his proceedings, for a time, seemed to imply that he would at all hazards maintain it. Peace was hastily concluded both with France and Spain; Tonnage and

Poundage were exacted with greater rigour than before; all persons possessed of landed property to the amount of forty pounds a year, were required to accept the honour of knighthood, or to pay a fine; monopolies were revived in every department of trade, and thrown into the hands not of individuals but of companies; while all, no matter what their rank might be, who exhibited any reluctance to treat proclamations as law, were subjected to severe penalties. But this was not all. While custom-house-officers were permitted to break all bulks, or to seize goods, even in store-houses and cellars, recusants were openly admitted to compositions; and the tenants of crown-lands received, as a compensation for compulsory loans, what amounted, in many instances, to little short of a grant of the fee-simple of their farms. Such conduct displayed at once the thoughtlessness of the king, and the desperate state of his circumstances. Yet it was at least matched by the bearing of Laud in the management of ecclesiastical affairs. The latter, by innovating, slightly to be sure, but still imprudently, on the mode of celebrating divine worship, gave great offence to more than the Puritans; and excited an uneasy suspicion,—for which there was, indeed, no foundation in fact,—that he looked forward to a speedy reunion between the Churches of England and of Rome.

The two great engines of which Charles made use in the furtherance of his projects against public liberty, were the courts of High-Commission, and of the Star-Chamber. By the former, all offences against the established religion, including the reprobation of its ministers, and attacks on its creeds and formularies, were visited; by the latter, such civil offences as might not be exactly cognizable in other courts, were investigated and punished. The following specimens of the mode of procedure adopted in each, will

give the reader some idea of the nature of those formidable tribunals.

There was one Leighton, a Puritan preacher,—a man of enthusiastic temper and courage, who, setting danger at nought, published a libel against the court of High-Commission; in which he dealt very freely with the characters of the bishops. Being placed at the bar of the outraged court, he was, after a brief trial, found guilty; and a sentence passed, which in due time was carried into execution. He was fined five thousand pounds; was twice publicly flogged, having one of his ears cut off, and one of his nostrils slit, on each occasion; and then, bloody and mutilated as he was, became an inmate of a prison, till it should please the sovereign to release him. A similar punishment was inflicted about the same time, by the Star-Chamber, on a barrister named Prynne, whose offence consisted in the publication of a silly book, in which stage-plays were condemned as immoral, the queen, by implication, accused of unchastity, and the court of Star-Chamber pronounced a nuisance.

Galled by these proceedings, and harassed by the vigilance of Laud, who put to silence the most popular of their preachers by enforcing the law of license; the more sincere of the Puritans began to emigrate in great numbers to America, where they founded the colony of New England. Had Charles and his advisers been actuated by considerations of sound policy, they would have promoted the emigration, rather than strove to arrest its tide. But more eager to break the spirit of the party, than to rid themselves of a body of disaffected men, they prohibited, by proclamation, a continuance of the system, and actually brought back from the river, Hazelrig, Hampden, Pym, and Oliver Cromwell, all of whom had embarked to join their associates across the Atlantic. They found ample reason, a few years later, to lament this unwise step; when the men

thus thwarted in their design of withdrawing from the stage, became the most active and daring leaders in the scenes of confusion that overtook the kingdom.

It is necessary now to advert, for a brief space, to the condition of Ireland and of Scotland; where, as well as in other quarters, there were presented many obstacles to the establishment of peace. The former country, indeed, after coming under the management of the earl of Strafford, soon ceased to be troublesome. By the exercise of a vigorous, though somewhat arbitrary policy, he not only suppressed all attempts at rebellion in the provinces, but rendered the parliament as submissive as even Charles could have desired. His small but well-equipped army, also, was kept in a state of the highest efficiency. But it was widely different with Scotland; where the spirit which came in with the Reformation, continued to exercise a boundless sway over the minds of a large portion of the inhabitants. These never forgave the re-establishment of Episcopacy by James, or his abortive attempt to force upon them a liturgy; and if they abstained from exhibiting their indignation otherwise than by murmurs and complaints, it was because the former grievance proved more nominal than real, and the latter had ceased to operate. The imprudence of Charles, and the immoderate zeal of Laud, soon brought matters back to more than their original disquiet. In an evil hour, the former issued a proclamation, by which the use of the surplice, and of the English Prayer-book was enjoined in the Scottish Churches. He had previously demanded and obtained from the nobles and gentry, a restitution of a part of the Church property, and appeared, in their jealous eyes, to meditate a resumption of the whole. In a moment, all the respect for primitive usage, which they had hitherto professed, was forgotten. The passions of the mob were by them excited; the most popular of the fanatical preachers

were countenanced in their extravagances; it was said, that not Prelacy alone, but Popery, was about to be re-introduced; and that there was no hope left, except in the firmness of men themselves. Such was the temper which prevailed throughout the whole of Scotland, south of the Tay, when in obedience to the commands of their superiors, the clergy prepared to celebrate divine worship in white-linen vestments, and with the aid of a service-book.

It was in Edinburgh that the first attempt was made to introduce the offensive ordinances. The dean appeared in his surplice and cope, and began to read the service, when there arose all at once, from various parts of the building, a wild tumult of voices, which gave vent to the most alarming cries, and the most indecent execrations. Still the dean went on,—till suddenly, a three-legged stool was discharged from the hand of a strong woman, which, had it not missed its mark, would have silenced him for ever. A scene of the most disgraceful riot ensued. The windows were broken; the bishop, who took the dean's place, was pelted with mud and stones; and the whole body of ecclesiastics were not only driven from the Church, but narrowly escaped assassination in the streets. It was, indeed, the intervention of a few well-disposed gentlemen, supported by the civil power, which alone saved them, though not till after the bishop had been rolled in the kennel, and his robes torn into shreds.

The example set in the metropolis was immediately followed in all the most considerable towns in the south and west of Scotland; and it was to no purpose that lord Traquair, the king's representative, strove to repress the movement. How far, indeed, he really desired to do so, may be doubted; but it is certain that that which began in popular tumult, soon organized itself into a systematic and well-ordered conspiracy. A bond, which received the imposing title of The

Solemn League and Covenant, was entered into for the subversion of prelacy and the maintenance of true religion. It soon obtained the signatures, not of the preachers and common people alone, but of some of the most influential nobles in the kingdom. Indeed, there seemed to be but one determination among all classes, namely, to resist, even unto death, the evils with which they were threatened. In this emergency, the king twice sent the marquess of Hamilton from London, to soothe and mediate with the disaffected. He failed on both occasions. Not even the offer to abandon the service-book, and a promise that the authority of the bishops should be curtailed, made now the slightest impression. The General Assembly met; it denounced Episcopacy altogether; it ratified the Covenant; it called upon all true sons of the Kirk to fight for God and his cause; and, the people rising to arms in every quarter, a force soon took the field, than which, both from its enthusiasm and numbers, Scotland had rarely furnished one more formidable. Nor was it wanting in able leaders. General Leslie, an officer of great talent and experience, who had grown gray in the service of the United Provinces, appeared at its head; and after seizing almost all the strong-holds north of the Tweed, took up a position on the left bank of that river.

Among other expedients, to supply himself with money, Charles, soon after the dissolution of the parliament in 1629, had issued a proclamation for the levying of ship-money, not in the towns along the coast only, but throughout all England. Other arbitrary acts on his part had given deep umbrage to the people; but this last created a ferment, to which there had as yet appeared nothing akin. It was never heard of before, that the inhabitants of inland counties should be subject to such a tax; of the legality of which, even as it affected the sea-ports, no one professed to be an

advocate. Multitudes, however, had paid, being threatened with prosecution or imprisonment, when John Hampden, of whom notice has already been taken, boldly resisted the demand. His share of the burden came to no more than twenty shillings,—but he refused to bear it. He was proceeded against in the court of Exchequer; and after a long and anxious trial, of which all England may be said to have been the spectators, sentence was given against him by seven out of the twelve barons. Encouraged by this decision, the king now resumed the impost, and partly by means of the funds thereby realized, partly by a forced loan, he contrived to enrol and bring into the field, an army of twenty thousand men. With this he marched towards the border; but he soon found that in point neither of discipline nor temper were his forces to be brought into comparison with those of the insurgents. The consequence was, that he consented to open a negotiation, which was immediately followed by a truce; as well as by an agreement, on both sides, to refer the matters in dispute between them to the decision of a new parliament and a new general assembly.

Though very little satisfied with this arrangement, and exceedingly distrustful of its issue, the king, whose military chest was already exhausted, made haste to disband his troops, while he himself returned to London, that he might consult with his friends there as to what course it behoved him to follow. He was scarcely gone, when the Scots, as if eager to convince him of his error, resumed their hostile attitude. What was now to be done? To repeat the measures which had enabled him to raise his first armament, while it would probably have met the exigencies of the moment, must, without doubt, exasperate the people beyond all endurance. Other modes of using the prerogative failed, and his council came to the unanimous determination, that, let the consequences be what they might, a par-

liament must be assembled. It was to no purpose that the king warned them of the utter hopelessness of this scheme:—they pledged themselves to support him; they promised to go any lengths, should the commons again prove refractory; and the king gave way. A parliament was accordingly called,—but the spirit exhibited by the commons, on the first day of the session, demonstrated that the king had rightly calculated the issue. No business whatever was done; for the commons proving altogether impracticable, the parliament was dissolved within the space of three weeks from the opening of the session. Very serious disturbances, and still more alarming conferences, took place on this occasion. The discarded commoners, repairing to the houses where the deputies from Scotland resided, assured them that the people of England were prepared to make with them common cause,—while the mob attacked Lambeth palace with great fury, and were hindered from levelling it with the earth, only by a discharge of fire-arms.

Not inattentive to the state of public feeling in the south, the Scots were again in arms. A body of twenty-three thousand foot, and three thousand horse, passed the Tweed, and meeting with little opposition, soon overran Northumberland, Durham, and a large portion of Yorkshire. Meanwhile the king, round whom a majority of the House of Lords began to rally, raised, from the most devoted of his adherents, a slender pecuniary supply; and again set out at the head of twenty thousand men, to meet the invaders. He faced,—but warned by the results of one or two skirmishes that he was not in a condition to engage them, he carefully avoided a battle. Again his resources began to fail; in order to restore them he called a great council of peers, to meet him at York.—a sort of feudal assembly, of which England had seen no specimen since the era of the Plantagenets. But the peers, though not wanting in

will, were unable to furnish more than two hundred thousand pounds; a sum wholly inadequate to place the king on a footing with the power to which he was opposed. This, however, was not the only act which the peers were prepared to perform. They had intended to recommend, at all hazards, the calling of another parliament; when, to the surprise of some, and the great joy of others, Charles anticipated the request. A truce was forthwith concluded with the Scots. They were allowed for their maintenance, out of the royal treasury, a certain monthly stipend; and the king, having thus secured his people against the dangers of rapine, departed for the metropolis.

No difficulties, short of those by which he was actually surrounded, would have induced the king to adopt a measure, from which he augured, but too surely, a renewal of inroads upon his prerogative, and the utmost peril to his advisers. He felt that a parliament, called as this would be, could not be dissolved as he had dissolved others; but that its demands, if they could not be evaded, must be complied with, as the only mode of avoiding worse evils. The event proved that he had neither miscalculated the temper of the body, nor the degree of power which remained in his own hands. The commons were no sooner met, than they proceeded to condemn, as illegal and oppressive, every act which had been performed during the recent recess, by the authority of an order in council. This sweeping declaration included not only such proceedings as bore upon the arbitrary collection of revenues, but the judgments of courts of law, whether directed against defaulters, or against men charged with the more grave offences of sedition and nonconformity. Leighton and Prynne, for example, as well as all persons similarly circumstanced, were released from confinement, and damages to the amount of five thousand pounds were given them in each case against the judges. Ministers,

ejected because they refused to obey the canons, were reinstated in their benefices. Nor was this all. The nation, it was said, had suffered so much from the want of a parliament, that it became necessary to provide against the recurrence of such an evil for the future. A bill was accordingly passed, which, while it limited the duration of each parliament to three years, rendered it imperative on the crown to issue writs for a new parliament within three years, at the furthest, from the dissolution of the old; and took away the power of dissolving at all, till the houses should have sat at least fifty days. So far, though they may have proceeded with as much of passion as of reflection, the commons certainly did nothing that was not beneficial to the country. Their next measure was one of pure revenge,—of which the consequences were not more fatal to the immediate sufferer than to many of those who took a prominent part against him.

The man most obnoxious to popular odium of all by whom the councils of the king were believed to be influenced at this moment, was lord Strafford. Awakened, by the violence of the popular party, to a sense of his country's danger, he had gone over to the other side, where he used more than common exertions to maintain the royal authority, both in England and Ireland,—and his talents being equal to his zeal, the king owed it mainly to him, that as yet one portion of his dominions professed obedience to his will. The Commons determined, both out of rancour towards the individual, and as a means of exhibiting the full extent of their power, that Strafford should suffer. With closed doors, they voted him an enemy to his country, and drew up articles of impeachment,—which the House of Lords, too timid, or too compliant, consented, without so much as a remonstrance, to entertain. Strafford, who was with his master when intelligence of the proceeding reached him, hastened to

the house. He was not so much as permitted to sit down; but being informed of the decision to which his peers had come, was handed over to the Usher of the Black Rod, and conveyed to prison. A like fate would have awaited the chief secretary Windebank, had he not anticipated it by a timely flight; but Laud was too magnanimous to fly. He, also, at the instance of the Commons, stood charged with high-treason, and passed from his palace at Lambeth to the Tower.

These bold proceedings, while they deprived Charles of the ablest and most trust-worthy of his advisers, produced a great effect throughout the nation, and prepared men's minds for other and not less atrocious measures, which rapidly gathered one upon another. Judges, sheriffs, pursuivants, every one, in short, who had taken any part in the execution of obnoxious proclamations, were mercilessly prosecuted, and still more mercilessly punished. Committees sat, indeed, which, carrying on the several departments of the government, took all power, nominally as well as virtually, out of the hands of the executive. Meanwhile the language customary in such cases was held equally within and without the house. No man desired to bring about a revolution,—no man wished to innovate upon the spirit of the constitution:—to renovate, to restore, to improve these, were the sole ends at which the patriots aimed; and to support their representatives in the pursuit of so just a purpose, the people could not too strenuously exert themselves. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the populace, stimulated by the perusal of numerous tracts, which the party took care to circulate among them, entered with great earnestness into the contest, while the royalists, brow-beaten in all quarters, and deprived of the leaders whom they had been accustomed to follow, looked on with amazement and horror at events which they believed themselves unable to control.

Among other means of strengthening themselves, the Commons entered into a bond of mutual alliance and support with the deputies from the Scottish army. Liberal sums were voted for their use, while the management of them was intrusted, not to the king, but to a committee; while the Scots, in return, laboured to disseminate throughout London hostility to the establishment, and a preference for their own more bald and republican form of church government. They so far succeeded, that a petition was got up in which the corruptions of the church were denounced in no measured terms; and as fifteen thousand names were appended to it, the party proceeded to turn it to account. A bill was passed which pronounced clergymen incapable of exercising any civil authority, or otherwise interfering in the management of civil matters. This, of which it was impossible to mistake the design, the lords refused to sanction; nevertheless the bishops (for against them, considered as peers of parliament, the first grand attack was made) received, from day to day, more alarming proofs that it was, indeed, high time to prepare for the worst extremities.

Meanwhile the committee, which had been appointed to draw up articles of impeachment against lord Strafford, brought its labours to a close; and the earl was arraigned before his peers, under circumstances of peculiar hardship. In the first place, the king, with a cruel facility, gave his consent to the examination of the members of the privy-council, touching advice given by them, under the seal of secrecy, and in the discharge of their official duties. In the next place, the Irish parliament, which had so recently loaded the Lord Lieutenant with honours, sent over a deputation to support the prosecution. And last, though not least, the House of Lords was carefully weeded of all whom the prosecutors suspected of a friendly feeling towards the accused. Similar in every respect to the

spirit which dictated their preparations was the temper of the body to whom the management of affairs was intrusted. Sir Henry Vane, after purloining from the cabinet of his father, the secretary, a document containing notes of the proceedings of a privy-council, adduced it as proof that Strafford had encouraged the king in his arbitrary proceedings, by an assurance of support from the troops whom he had enrolled in Ireland. Then, and then only, for all the other charges fell to the ground, Strafford felt that he was in danger. Yet his defence proved so eloquent, so touching, and so manly, that his judges exhibited manifest symptoms of an intention to acquit him. But the escape of Strafford was an event which his enemies could not venture to contemplate, and they adopted the following expedient to prevent it. The Commons withdrew to their own house; proceedings by impeachment were abandoned, and a bill of attainder brought in, and read with closed doors. A report was, at the same time, industriously circulated, that a deep-laid conspiracy for the assassination of the people's representatives had been discovered. Mobs were assembled, which threatened the life of the king himself, and kept all London in alarm. Then came a covenant, drawn up after the model of that which had been adopted in Scotland,—to which the members of the lower house affixed their signatures; and the paper being submitted to the lords, only the bishops and the popish peers ventured to object to it. As a necessary consequence, they were commanded to absent themselves from the house; and as, though differing widely on every other topic, they were equally disposed to support Strafford, that nobleman was left with only nineteen friends in an assembly which consisted of fifty-six members.

By such expedients as these was the bill of attainder carried through both houses of parliament, and it now only remained to obtain the royal assent. Charles

paused upon the brink of so terrible a precipice,—for he knew that Strafford had incurred the hatred of the Commons only through his fidelity to the crown; and the crown, not many weeks previous to the opening of the session, had assured him of protection at all hazards. He consulted the bishops, of whom one, Juxon, of London, entreated him to do no violence to his own conscience; and he spent days and nights in a state of pitiable distress. But neither the advice of Juxon, nor the dictates of his own better feelings, served to counteract that sense of utter despondency to which, at this juncture, Charles seems to have given way. Having received from Strafford himself a letter, couched in the most chivalrous and romantic terms, in which he besought his master to accept of the blood of a devoted servant, as a voluntary offering for the peace of the nation, the king signed, by commission, the fatal bill. On the 11th of May, 1641, this high-minded nobleman was beheaded on Tower-hill, amid the shouts and yells of a blood-thirsty mob.

While the fate of Strafford yet trembled in the balance, certain friends both to him and to royalty made an effort, ill-advised, perhaps, and in its result truly unfortunate, to enlist the army in their cause. Finding the troops dissatisfied, on account of the preference shown, in every respect, to the Scots, they drew up a petition in their name, in which the parliament was assured of their readiness to march upon London, for the purpose of delivering the senators from the presence of illegal mobs, and aiding them in the maintenance of their own just privileges, as well as of the just privileges of the crown.

Before a sufficient number of signatures could be collected, the secret was betrayed by colonel Goring to Mr. Pym, and the utmost use was made of it, both to inflame the passions of the people, and to sanction further encroachments on the king's prerogative. Bills

were hastily brought in for the abolition of the courts of Star-Chamber and High-Commission, to both of which, Charles, after some hesitation, consented; and a royal proclamation became in consequence binding on those, and those alone, who might choose, of their own free will, to treat it with respect. Then followed a law, which, by changing the terms of the judges' patents, and ensuring to them a continuance in office during good behaviour, placed them above the temptation to pervert justice in subserviency to the wishes of the sovereign. Had the Commons stopped here, no friend to rational liberty could have found fault with them; but unfortunately, they did not stop here. After dissolving sundry courts besides,—such as the marshal's-court, the court of stannary, and other legacies from the feudal times, they brought forward a motion that the parliament then assembled should not be dissolved, except by its own consent. How the king could be induced to ratify such an act, which placed him for ever at the mercy of his enemies, it is hard to say. But he did consent to it;—probably, because he felt that his affairs were already beyond the reach of any other remedy than the sword.

Charles had long promised to visit his subjects of Scotland; and he now made ready to redeem that pledge, in spite of a warm opposition on the part of the Commons, who anticipated no good from the journey. They feared that the presence of their sovereign might revive the dormant loyalty of the Scots, and after that, the support which had heretofore been given to themselves, would be transferred to their enemies. That the king's hopes corresponded with their apprehensions, the events of a few weeks demonstrated. Charles went to Scotland, prepared to sacrifice every thing for popularity. He took into his confidence those whom he had least reason to trust, without, however, accomplishing any other purpose

than to weaken the attachment of his real friends; and yielded right after right, till he had ceased to retain anything of monarchy, except the name. Still the English parliament retained its apprehensions, and, affecting to credit a rumour of fresh conspiracies, applied for, and obtained a guard from the king's general in the south, the earl of Essex. It is to be observed, that by this time both the army of the north and the Scottish army were disbanded. As soon as it was ascertained that the king would not defer his northward journey, the arrears due to both were paid up, and the men and officers dismissed to their own homes.

The marriage of the princess Mary to William, prince of Orange, constitutes the single incident of which it is necessary to make mention, as diversifying, in any manner, the general aspect of affairs, or throwing a ray of light over the increasing storm. It took place previous to the king's departure from London; and the satisfaction arising from it was still felt, when there broke out in Ireland a rebellion, so disastrous in its consequences, as to cast, for the present, every other topic into the shade. It appears that the king, unwilling to disband Strafford's troops, which, though officered exclusively by Protestants, consisted almost entirely of Papists, had instructed the lords Ormond and Antrim to keep the men together, either by sending them over regimented as they were to serve in the Low Countries, or by instructing them, when formally disembodied, to look upon their military engagement as still subsisting. He had, likewise, with a view to ensure the loyalty of his Irish subjects in general, signed certain bills for bettering their condition, which he desired his representative to submit to the parliament, and to press forward with all the weight attaching to office and station. The Irish parliament, made aware of the king's intentions, suddenly prorogued itself; while the lords-justices exerted their

whole influence to defeat his object. Irritated by this twofold defeat, the earl of Antrim arranged, with the heads of several clans, a project for surprising Dublin Castle, and erecting the royal standard. The scheme was very imperfectly concocted; the instruments were altogether incongruous, both in feeling and ultimate wishes; and the execution, in every respect, corresponded with the inadequate preparations that were made for it. Warned of the meditated attempt on the castle, the justices succeeded in defeating it; while, one after another, many of the parties pledged to rise, withdrew from their engagement. The consequence was, a wild and disorderly rising of the natives, who made Protestants and persons of English lineage everywhere their victims; and who, by using the king's name,—a measure for which they possessed no authority, implicated him in the guilt of those atrocities, of which they and their barbarous leaders were the authors.

Charles was preparing to quit Scotland, when intelligence of these disasters reached him. He made haste to nominate the earl of Ormond to the vacant dignity of lieutenant, and gave him full powers to suppress the rebellion, even at the sword's point; after which he himself set out for London, very little gratified with the results of the experiment which he had tried among his northern subjects. When he entered London, the populace, with their usual fickleness, greeted him cordially and respectfully; while the lord mayor and aldermen addressed him in a tone of loyal affection to which he had for some time been a stranger. The king was much gratified, and ventured, for the moment, to encourage a hope that the tempest had expended its violence: but he was soon awakened from this agreeable dream. The House of Commons, conscious that there was for them no safe retreat, delayed not to rouse again the dormant whirlwind. They

greeted him with a remonstrance, in which every arbitrary act of which he had been guilty since the commencement of his reign was set forth with studied particularity; and, instead of presenting it, as custom required, to the sovereign himself, they caused it to be printed, and widely circulated throughout the country. There was no mistaking the design of this proceeding, which the king vainly endeavoured to meet by publishing a reply. Few, indeed, took the trouble to peruse the latter document; all men of all parties read the former; and a feeling of respect for the throne, which had begun of late to revive, was suddenly and irretrievably choked ere it had time to gather strength.

It is not necessary to attempt a minute detail of the consequences which followed upon the renewal of party spirit. Enough is done, when I state, that the movement party, appealing to the worst passions of the mob, were by the mob eagerly supported; and that, in a short time, all London swarmed with bands of ruffians, who made open war upon character, station, property, and life itself. Bands of gentlemen, on the other hand, began to assemble around the king's palace, between whom and the rabble frequent collisions took place; and who, bestowing the epithet of Round-heads on their opponents, as a term of reproach, were by them, in return, denominated Cavaliers. It was the great object of these mobs to overawe both the king and the bishops; the latter being regarded, doubtless with perfect truth, as the main bulwark of monarchy. To such a height, indeed, was the system of intimidation carried, that the prelates found it impossible to attend to their duties in the parliament; and hence, thirteen of them, after stating this fact, drew up a protest against any acts which might be passed during their compulsory absence. It is not very easy to defend this step on the score either of policy or propriety. Life is not worth preserving if it must be purchased at the

expense of a positive dereliction of duty, while, even at the worst, it was in the power of the more timid to delegate their suffrages, by proxy, to persons in whom they might confide. But if the bishops acted injudiciously, the behaviour of the Commons was at once tyrannical and unjust. The protesting prelates were committed to the Tower, and threatened with the terrors of an impeachment.

Indignant at this gross violation of all law and decency, the king took a step which tended only to involve him more and more in difficulties and dangers. He demanded the impeachment of the leaders of the country party; and finding the Commons slow to meet his wishes, he proceeded in person to arrest the obnoxious individuals. Lord Kimbolton, afterwards earl of Manchester, Hollis, sir Arthur Hazelrig, Hampden, Pym, and Strode, were the objects of his peculiar fury, and they all, being quietly smuggled out of the house, escaped the first burst of royal indignation. Nevertheless, the very attempt to seize them in their places produced a ferment, in comparison with which all other tumults might be esteemed trifling. The obnoxious members found refuge in the Guildhall. They were conducted thence to Westminster, by six thousand men in arms, and a numerous artillery; while the king, after a vain attempt to soften his enemies, by acknowledging that he had done wrong, was glad to escape, almost alone, to his palace at Hampton Court.

Rapid was the progress, from this time forth, of that terrible disease which threatened with one common destruction the dignity of the throne and the liberties of the people. The king's friends, distracted and divided among themselves, fled from their proper posts in both houses; whereas, the country party, whose views no one could longer misunderstand, repeated their blows against the last bulwarks of royalty with the utmost vigour. The bishops were expelled from

parliament by a bill, to which the king, at his consort's persuasion, consented. The queen herself was even threatened with impeachment, her chaplain imprisoned, and her confessor driven into exile. She saw, as well as her husband, that there was but one course to pursue; and carrying all that remained of the crown jewels and plate along with her, she quitted the kingdom. In the mean time the Commons, not unaware of the purposes which took her abroad, hastened to render them abortive. They passed a bill, conferring on themselves the command of the militia, as well as the right of nominating the governors of fortified places, and the lords lieutenants of counties, and sent it to Charles, then a sojourner in Dover, with an intimation that his immediate consent was expected. The king endeavoured to procrastinate; but finding that procrastination would not avail, peremptorily refused the demand. Had he returned at once to London, and thrown himself on the protection of the people, it is just possible that he might have as yet been supported; but he utterly distrusted the capital, as indeed he had too much cause to do, and he carefully avoided it. He turned his face towards the north, and never halted till he arrived in York, where, as yet, the hearts of all classes were with him. He was followed thither by numbers, upon whom a conviction of the truth had at length broken in; by lord Falkland, by Hyde, afterwards lord Clarendon, and by many illustrious individuals besides. And he was immediately surrounded by a body-guard of six hundred gentlemen and yeomen, all of them mounted and armed at their own expense. Charles felt himself once more a king, and to the insulting demands of the parliament he returned such answers, as left no alternative to either party, except an appeal to the sword.

Great, indeed, were the advantages enjoyed by the republican party at this most important crisis in public

affairs. They had already removed, on their own authority, such lieutenants of counties and governors of forts as they believed to be well disposed to the royal cause; and were thus in possession of all the military resources of the kingdom. An army, moreover, which had been for some time embodied with the ostensible view of suppressing the rebellion in Ireland, was at their devotion; while of money they received ample supplies, as well from the assessments which they laid upon the people at large, as from the voluntary offerings of their supporters. The king, on the contrary, was at once destitute of treasure, and dependent, both for men and arms, on such as chose voluntarily to supply them, while even they took care, by a manifesto, ably drawn up, to make public rather their hostility to the designs of the levellers, than their blind devotion to the cause of royalty. Yet, his courage rising with the amount of difficulties which surrounded him, he shrank not from the mighty struggle. Sir John Hotham, a partisan of Hampden's faction, had been recently put in command of the citadel of Hull. It contained the arms of the troops recently embodied against the Scots, of which it was a prodigious object with the king to obtain possession; and he made a bold attempt to win it. But Hotham refused to admit his sovereign, even though accompanied by a private escort only, and the baffled king vainly complained to a parliament which supported the man who had obeyed their instructions. Meanwhile colonel Goring, of whom I have had occasion to speak in another place, as one who betrayed a secret, and, as a necessary consequence, wounded his own reputation, seems to have repented of his baseness. He was governor of Portsmouth, and doubtless excited the suspicion of the Commons; for an order all at once reached him, to resign his strong-hold into other hands, and himself to join the army, which was already assembled under the

earl of Essex. Goring used every possible expedient to gain time, till he had exacted an oath of fealty from his troops; after which he avowed, without equivocation, that having accepted his command under the king's commission, he could not, unless so ordered by his sovereign, resign it in favour of another. The Commons were not more surprised than enraged; and Essex, in obedience to their command, which he had learned to regard as law, marched with all his forces, and invested the place.

When Charles heard of this movement he was at York, where a slender supply of arms and munitions of war, the produce of the jewels which Henrietta had carried to Holland, reached him. He hastened to distribute them among his friends, and, satisfied that the moment of action was at length arrived, gathered those friends around him. A manifesto was forthwith published, which, after enumerating all the wrongs of which the parliament had been guilty, and assuring the king's lieges of his design to govern according to law, denounced Essex and his assistants and abettors, both in the field and elsewhere, as traitors. This was followed by an immediate advance to Nottingham, where, on the 22nd of August, 1642, the royal standard was hoisted.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CIVIL WAR.—CHARLES GIVEN UP BY THE SCOTS.—DIVISION OF PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT.—OLIVER CROMWELL.—HIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE KING.—PRESBYTERIANS AND INDEPENDENTS.—TRIUMPH OF THE LATTER.—THE KING'S FLIGHT AND IMPRISONMENT IN CARISBROOKE CASTLE.—RISING OF THE ROYALISTS AND SCOTS.—IT IS DEFEATED.—PRIDE'S PURGE.—THE KING'S TRIAL, CONDEMNATION, EXECUTION, AND CHARACTER.—MISCELLANEOUS OCCURRENCES.

[A. D. 1642 to A. D. 1649.]

OF the terrible contest which, for the space of seven years, caused the best blood of England to be poured out like water, it would be useless, in a work like this, to attempt any digested account. The details of military operations, even when conducted with perfect regularity, are at once so minute and so complicated, that to render them intelligible or interesting in description, to the ordinary reader, requires more space than my limits will afford; while to follow the course of a struggle which found an arena in every county, if not in every village throughout the kingdom, would be clearly incompatible with the purposes of a compendium of general history. I must be content, therefore, to notice only such incidents as seem best calculated to convey a just picture of the state of the times, and glancing briefly at the more important actions in the order in which they occurred, to draw my readers' attention rather to their consequences, than to the circumstances which may have attended them while in progress.

Allusion was made, in the preceding chapter, to the great difficulties under which the king laboured when driven to unsheath the sword. All the fortified places in the kingdom, with their magazines of arms and ammunition, were in the hands of the Republicans.

The same faction had an army, well equipped and disciplined, of which the earl of Essex was in command, and which amounted to fifteen thousand men. The fleet was entirely at their devotion, being officered by persons of their own choice, and the sea, as a matter of course, was in a great measure closed against the king. Almost all the towns, moreover, especially London, were with them; and if throughout the rural districts their adherents fell somewhat short of those of the king, the difficulty of assembling a loosely scattered population rendered this disadvantage virtually innocuous. Again, talent of the highest order, enthusiasm the deepest and the most dark, an unquenchable thirst of revenge, and boundless ambition—all these passions were in full operation in the breasts of their leaders; and they all found, in a populace excited by the most artful means, ready instruments with which to work their purposes. Did the Commons complain that money was wanting? not only were taxes paid without reluctance, but voluntary offerings of plate and jewels came in from all quarters,—nay, the expedient of fasting one day in the week, and devoting the price of that day's meal to the public service, was no sooner suggested, than it was eagerly embraced. We cannot be surprised to find, under such circumstances, that there was exhibited, on the part of the Commons, no disposition to concede for the sake of peace,—or that they refused to grant anything to the feelings or principles of a prince, whom they believed to be absolutely at their mercy.

While the mass of what would now be termed the commercial and manufacturing interests adhered to the Parliament, with a considerable proportion of the lower orders both in town and country, the king saw himself supported by a large majority of the nobility and gentry; a high-spirited and loyal race, who, not indisposed to keep the prerogative within just limits,

were at the same time, both from principle and prejudice, strongly attached to the cause of monarchy. A few indeed, even of this class, continued their attendance at Westminster, some from a conviction that they would best promote the general good by endeavouring to moderate the excessive violence of the country party, others because they found themselves involved in a tempest which they had contributed to raise, and were now unable to control. But even of those who for a time had stood forward in the cause of what they conceived to be public liberty, the ablest and the most conscientious now took their place under the royal banner. Such were the upright and the accomplished lord Falkland, the able and honest Hyde, the gallant earl of Newcastle, and many others; while on the opposite side, the earls of Northumberland, Holland, Lincoln, and Bedford, with Selden, Whitelock, Hollis, Waller, Pierpoint, and Rudyard, laboured continually to bring about a pacification by mutual concessions. That, however, in which the king felt himself mainly deficient, was the command of money and of arms. With respect to the former, he could depend on little else than the voluntary contributions of his friends, some of whom mortgaged their last acre in the cause; while in the absence of the latter, he was compelled to borrow the weapons of the trained-bands, under a pledge that they should be restored at the conclusion of hostilities.

When the royal standard was hoisted at Nottingham, the king's whole force did not exceed three hundred infantry and two thousand cavalry. The latter, composed entirely of gentlemen and their tenantry, were, indeed, of a very superior order, and the former, though imperfectly disciplined, might be accounted good troops; but of artillery, of which he possessed fifteen or sixteen pieces, he could carry little into the field, by reason of the great scarcity of draught-animals, and the absence of means with which to purchase them.

Still the die was cast, and no alternative remained, except to follow up with vigour the fortune which was before him. An attempt was indeed made, to re-open a negotiation, which the parliament met with insult and neglect, while they pushed the siege of Portsmouth, and compelled it, through the negligence of the commander, to yield in a few days to the pressure of famine. Charles thereupon issued a proclamation, in which he avowed once more his determination to uphold the sovereignty of the laws; and then eluding the vigilance of Essex, marched towards Shrewsbury, where his friends were prepared to welcome him with strong reinforcements.

The first blow struck in this memorable contest, if we except a cavalry skirmish not far from Shrewsbury, occurred on the 23rd of October, 1642, at a place called Edge Hill, in the county of Warwick. Essex, alarmed for the safety of London, had marched by a route parallel to that of the king, and failing to interpose himself, came up with the royal forces about three miles in advance of the village of Keinton. The action was severe, but indecisive; each side suffering a partial reverse, and each claiming a victory. Yet the moral effect was favourable to the king, who took, a few days afterwards, the castle of Banbury, with its governor and a thousand men. In a moment, the flames of civil strife were excited in all quarters of the kingdom. Encouraged by the bold attitude which Charles had assumed, his partisans began everywhere to muster their followers; and there occurred, between them and the adherents of the parliament, frequent skirmishes,—unimportant, perhaps, as regarded the general issues of the contest, but marked with all the hardihood and much of the ferocity, which gives its peculiar character to domestic warfare in general.

Incomplete as the victory of Edge Hill was, it seems by no means improbable, that a rapid march upon

London would have placed Charles at this time in a situation to obtain peace on very favourable terms. It is certain, that the parliament experienced great alarm, and that the friends of order, of whom London contained many, lent all their influence to the side of negotiation,—while Essex, cut off from the great road, was compelled to make a wide *détour*, and the Trainbands, without him, were in no condition to offer an effectual resistance. Charles, however, loitered by the way, halting in Oxford, establishing a garrison in Reading, and entering into discussion with the commissioners whom his enemies employed to delay his progress. The consequence was, that the Republicans found time to arouse the spirits of their adherents, and to throw up a chain of works for the defence of the capital, which, on the arrival of the cavaliers at Turnham-green, was occupied by twenty-four thousand men, Essex and his regulars forming a part of the garrison. How far a battle, under such circumstances, might or might not have been hazarded, it is useless to inquire. The Royalist leaders decided against the movement, and the troops fell back leisurely and in good order to the winter quarters which were allotted to them in Oxford.

The winter of 1642 was spent in a fruitless effort to re-open the negotiation which late events had interrupted. Probably neither party was sincere; at all events, the demands on the one side were treated by the other as inadmissible; while both made the best preparations which circumstances would allow, to open the next campaign with effect. The Parliamentarians, as their resources were in every respect more ample, so were they the first to take the field. On the 15th of April, 1643, they invested Reading; and, the king being unable to bring any effectual relief, the place was surrendered on capitulation. But in conducting these operations during a season unusually severe, the Re-

publicans suffered so much from sickness, that for the space of nine months afterwards, Essex felt himself incapable of acting on the offensive. Meanwhile, the earl of Newcastle, the king's general in the north, kept lord Fairfax and the Hothams at bay; and, besides securing the obedience of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Durham, gained some successes in Yorkshire. On the other hand, in the midland counties, fortune was more evenly balanced; and in the south, the parliament had for a time the advantage. But if Waller, by the reduction of Winchester and Chichester, the relief of Gloucester, and the capture of Hereford, did the Commons good service, the exploits of sir Ralph Hopton, and the cavaliers of Cornwall and Devon, were not less advantageous to the king. Besides obtaining many lesser triumphs, these brave men achieved two important victories: one on Bradoc Down, over general Ruthven, the other at Stratton Hill, over the earl of Stamford. The latter, indeed, proved at once so decisive, and so little expected, that it drew the attention both of the king and of the parliament to the west, and both made ready to support, with every disposable man, their respective adherents in that quarter.

The earl of Essex, on account both of his rank and of his religion, was not a favourite with the root-and-branch portion of the parliament. His inactivity, also, disgusted them; at least, they made it a pretext for neglecting to furnish such supplies as he demanded; while they equipped a corps of 8000 men, and sent it under their favourite Waller, to oppose the men of Cornwall. Under these circumstances, the earl had fallen back from Reading to Tame, where a skirmish took place, of which it is necessary to make mention, solely because it cost the life of one of the most conspicuous as well as the most uncompromising among the authors of this bloody revolution.

At the commencement of the troubles, Charles had been joined by his two nephews, the princes Rupert and Maurice, the sons of the unfortunate prince Palatine. Rupert, a fiery impetuous soldier, was appointed to the command of the royal cavalry, at the head of which, on numerous occasions, he acquired great honour; and being now weary of the state of inaction to which he had so long been condemned, he determined to try whether any impression might be made on the Roundheads by surprise. With this view, he put himself under the guidance of one colonel Urrey, a deserter, who led him by a circuitous path to the rear of Essex's quarters; and falling suddenly upon two regiments of horse, and a body of foot, which occupied Wycombe, he slew a considerable portion, and made five hundred prisoners. He was on his way back to Oxford, when the enemy's cavalry overtook him, and a sharp action ensued at Chalgrove. It ended in the repulse of the pursuers; but that which gave to the affair its chief consequence in the eyes both of the victors and the vanquished was, that Hampden, the great leader of the antimonarchical faction, perished in the *mêlée*. He had hastily followed the cavalry as a volunteer, and received a pistol-shot in his shoulder, of which he soon afterwards died. Into the defects and excellencies of that distinguished man's character, it is not my business to inquire. That he was sincere in his abhorrence of tyranny, there is no reason to doubt. How far he may have permitted passion to take the place of principle in after-life, is quite another question. We know only that he died as he had lived, an enemy to the established constitution of his country both in church and state.

In the mean time, Waller was in full march into Somersetshire, and at Lansdown, near Bath, came up with the Royalists, now under the command of prince

Maurice and the marquess of Hertford. A fierce but indecisive battle ensued, which cost the Cavaliers some valuable lives, and deprived them for a time of the services of the gallant Hopton. Nevertheless, they continued their progress as far as Devizes, where they were joined by a corps of cavalry under Wilmot, and again stood to receive an attack with equal firmness and better success. Waller sustained, on this occasion, a signal defeat, which so disheartened Essex, that he abandoned his position at Thame, and fell back upon London. Immediately, the king, who had received valuable succours from abroad, sent prince Rupert westward, by whose junction with the Cornishmen an army was brought together superior in point both of numbers and valour to any which had as yet appeared on either side. It pushed rapidly upon Bristol, and through the cowardice or incapacity of the governor, that city, the second in point of wealth and importance in the kingdom, submitted to the king's authority.

Great was the dismay experienced in London, when intelligence of these events came in, and numerous and well-founded were the apprehensions, lest the Royalists, victorious on all sides, should march upon the capital, and put an end at once to the war and the liberties of the people. Strenuous efforts were accordingly made to set a treaty of accommodation on foot; indeed, the Lords sent to the Commons a series of resolutions, all tending to that point; but the Commons, though at first they gave to the overture a favourable consideration, were soon brought again under the dominion of the more violent of their leaders. It appeared, moreover, that of the advantages which they had won in the field, the Royalists were incapable of making use. There existed a jealousy between Newcastle and prince Rupert, which rendered the former reluctant to place himself under the personal

command of the latter. Newcastle had carried all before him in the north. He had defeated lord Fairfax at Atherton Moor; he had invested Hull; and though worsted in a partial encounter at Horncastle, where Oliver Cromwell commanded, was still superior to any thing which the Parliamentarians could oppose to him. Yet, he made no effort to join the king, though warned that such a movement was expected, and that, if accomplished in good time, the results could not fail of being decisive. Newcastle found, in the reluctance of the Yorkshire gentlemen to abandon their own homes, a ready excuse by which to evade a measure that was disagreeable to himself; and the king was in consequence compelled to relinquish the only wise plan which had as yet been formed since the opening of the contest.

Baffled in his main design, yet eager to accomplish something, the king was persuaded to lay siege to Gloucester; a place important, no doubt, on account both of its wealth and situation, but strong, considering the science of the age, and occupied by a numerous and an enthusiastic garrison. Never was determination more unfortunate in its result. The parliament found time, during the progress of that siege, to make peace with Essex, on whose mind the wrongs which he had suffered made a deep impression. The Londoners were prevailed upon to swell his ranks till they included full fourteen thousand men. Two other armies were raised, one under the earl of Manchester, to the amount of ten thousand, and a second of equal strength, of which the command was conferred upon Waller. Nor was this all. Nothing disheartened by the defection of the earls of Bedford, Holland, and Conway, who proceeded to Oxford; nor by a similar act on the part of Clare and Lovelace; nor yet by the retreat of Northumberland to his own home, they voted that no peace should be made with the malignants; but that

the pious people of Scotland should be invited to co-operate in the establishment of true religion and civil freedom in both kingdoms. In due time, commissioners took their departure for Edinburgh, where their arrival was already expected; and in spite of a stout opposition from the Independents, the Scots were received into alliance on their own terms, the Solemn League and Covenant being accepted by the English almost as it had been originally taken by the Scottish Reformers.

Meantime, the earl of Essex, carrying with him ample stores, set out for the beleaguered city. He conducted the movement with such skill and diligence, that the Royalists, though greatly superior in cavalry, failed to interrupt him; and Gloucester, receiving an abundant supply both of ammunition and food, was enabled to defy the utmost exertions of the besiegers. It was not the business of Essex to fight, so he withdrew again immediately, and strove, by a demonstration in the direction of Worcester, to deceive the Royalists; but he succeeded only in part. By forced marches, they reached Newbury before him; and a battle became inevitable. Like many others during the civil war, it ended without giving a decided advantage to either party; for night closed round the combatants while they yet fought, and the dawn of next day saw Essex pursuing his route, cautiously, though in excellent order, towards London. In this action fell one of the most amiable and accomplished of all the nobles who set life and fortune on the hazard in their sovereign's cause; Lucius Cary, viscount Falkland,—the delight and the ornament of private society; the friend, too, of liberty, so long as it ran not into licentiousness; and now, only by the stern impulse of duty, a soldier in the ranks of civil strife. Never, since the commencement of the war, had he been seen to smile. Of his person, also, on the adornment of which he had

been accustomed to bestow great pains, he became singularly regardless, and the burden of every speech, to which he gave utterance, both in public and private, was "Peace, peace." On the morning of the battle, however, he dressed himself with unusual care, and assigned as his reason, that the enemy should not find his body in an indecent situation. "For I am weary of the times," continued he; "I foresee much misery to my country, and I believe that I shall be out of it ere night." This high-minded man had barely attained to his thirty-fourth year when he perished.

Notwithstanding the failure at Gloucester, and the safe return of Essex to London, the general results of the contest were, as yet, favourable to the king. His prospects of the future were not, however, so satisfactory; because success availed him little, and the want of money alone, of which the effects had been severely felt throughout, rendered it next to impossible long to protract the war. Yet he endeavoured, during the early months of the winter, to keep alive the courage of his adherents by a display both of energy and moderation, for which, at one period of his career, few would have given him credit. Finding that the Commons had engaged the assistance of the Scots, he caused a stop to be put to the civil war in Ireland, and drew over a small but disciplined corps from that country, which performed, for a while, good service in North Wales. He then summoned his parliament to meet him at Oxford, and appealed to the better feelings of the nation, by showing them a rival council to that against which he was in arms. It is true that of Commons he met not more than one hundred and eighteen, while two hundred and twenty took the covenant at Westminster; but his list of Peers comprised forty-three, while that of his enemies included the names of twenty-two only. Neither this expedient, however, nor the readiness with which he yielded one

point after another, could either awaken the sympathies of the nation, or soften the rancour of the republicans. The winter of 1643 passed away, and the prospect of peace was still as remote as ever.

I have spoken of the king's want of funds, and of the evil consequences arising out of it. Of his soldiers many now began to desert, not so much through any abatement of good will, as from an absolute inability to subsist at their quarters. Others, more reckless, lived by plunder, in which some even of the superior officers set the example; while the fact of their doing so hindered multitudes, whose hearts were in the cause, from espousing it. The effect, indeed, of so much marauding was to cause, in several counties, a sort of independent organization among the inhabitants, who, taking no part in the great struggle, banded together for the sole purpose of defending their own property. Armed at first with hedge-stakes, latterly with more formidable weapons, the club-men, as they were called, went about in strong bodies, sometimes of four or five thousand men, and treated as enemies whomsoever they found in the act of plundering, no matter under what banners they served. Very different was the condition, and far more sanguine the anticipations, of the other side. With them money was abundant,—their armies became at once more numerous and better disciplined every day; while officers were found, to compete with whom, both for diligence and skill, those of the king were wholly inadequate. Fortune also now began to favour them in most of their undertakings. The Irish division, after reducing several strong-holds, was suddenly attacked near Nantwich, by sir Thomas Fairfax, and destroyed. Almost at the same time, Hopton, while endeavouring to penetrate into Sussex and Kent, was routed, though at the head of fourteen thousand men, by Waller, at Cherryton. But it was in the north that the most formidable cloud began to collect. Early in

January, twenty thousand of the Scots passed the Tweed. They endeavoured to surprise Newcastle, but failed; after which they crossed the Tyne, took possession of Sunderland, and compelled the marquess of Newcastle to observe them with his whole army. By this manœuvre, the Fairfaxes, after clearing Lincolnshire, were enabled to threaten York, the loss of which would have seriously impaired the king's influence in those parts; and Newcastle was, in consequence, compelled to throw himself into the place with all the infantry under his command. Immediately the Scots pushed forward; they formed a junction with Fairfax's troops, and the combined armies sat down, in due form, before the metropolis of the north.

It is worthy of remark, that there prevailed all this while a clamour throughout London for peace. More than one conspiracy, indeed, if the term be admissible, had been formed to attain that object,—of which one was remarkable, as originating with Waller the poet, and other individuals scarcely less distinguished for their integrity. Nay, the very women came in crowds to demand it of the parliament; nor were they driven away, except by the exercise of force, which cost the lives of some of the most forward. But the parliament, regardless of the wishes of the nation, and inattentive to their own growing unpopularity, continued bent on pushing their advantages to the utmost. They sent lord Manchester and Cromwell with six thousand additional troops, to reinforce the army of the north; and the siege of York was pressed with a degree of vigour which excited equal alarm at Oxford, and hope in Westminster. On the other hand, prince Rupert, after signaling his valour in Lancashire and Cheshire, took with him Newcastle's cavalry, under sir Charles Lucas, and hurried, at the head of twenty thousand men, to the relief of the distressed city. The republicans abandoned their lines at his approach, and fell

back as far as Marston-Moor, whither the prince, supported by every disposable man from the garrison, followed. On the 2nd of July he attacked them in position, and sustained, after a fierce encounter, the most disastrous defeat which had anywhere attended the royal arms since the commencement of the war.

From that hour the fate of the campaign,—the fate, indeed, of the war was determined. It was to no purpose that the king displayed both courage and skill in the south; that he overcame Waller at Cropredy Bridge; that he compelled Essex's infantry to capitulate at Lostwithiel; and that he fought a severe action, with comparatively trifling disadvantage, against Manchester and Cromwell, at Newbury. Such exploits, however creditable to those engaged, could by no means compensate for the rout of Marston-Moor, followed as it was by the loss of York, and the withdrawal of the marquess of Newcastle from the king's service. Nevertheless, when, on the 23rd of March, the armies on both sides withdrew into quarters, there were not wanting circumstances from which Charles was induced to hope that a pacification, on terms not absolutely ruinous to the monarchy, might be obtained. In the first place, Essex, though he had rejected an appeal from the leaders of the cavaliers, was well known to be weary of the struggle, and distrustful of the views of those who urged its continuance. In the next place, the spirit of party had displayed itself among the parliamentarians, both in the camp and in the senate; where the principles of Presbyterianism and Independency on the one hand, and of Republicanism and Aristocracy on the other, were brought, by the progress of events, into violent collision. Sir Henry Vane, Oliver Cromwell, Nathaniel Fiennes, and Oliver St. John, boldly avowed themselves the advocates of equality both in temporal and spiritual matters. The earls of Essex, Northumberland, Warwick, Denbigh,

and Manchester, with sir Philip Stapleton, sir William Waller, Hollis, Massey, Whitlock, Maynard, and Glyn, adhered to the Presbyterians, and promoted every reasonable plan of accommodation with the king. But the king was doomed in this case, as he had been in others, to be the dupe of his own sanguine temperament; for the contest, though sharp for a while, ended entirely in favour of the levellers. They carried the famous measure called the "Self-denying Ordinance;" thereby depriving of military command all such persons as should chance to have seats in either house of parliament; and then, with astonishing address, obtained an exception in favour of Cromwell, for whom, sir Thomas Fairfax, now appointed commander-in-chief, applied as a temporary second. The levellers did not stop even there. In order to vindicate themselves in the eyes of the nation, they consented once more to open a negotiation with the king; and took care, while advancing demands to which they knew that he would never accede, to profess the most earnest desire for peace. Not only the command of the army, but the abolition of Episcopacy, was now sought, as well as the abandonment to condign punishment of Charles's most faithful followers. The king, of course, could listen to no such terms; and the treaty of Uxbridge, as this abortive negotiation was termed, proved to be, like those which preceded it, a mere mockery.

The treaty of Uxbridge had not yet been formally opened, when archbishop Laud, whose committal to the Tower has been noticed, was brought to trial, condemned and executed. The judicial murder of so faithful a servant deeply affected Charles. He spoke of it as of an act which would not fail to rouse the anger of Heaven; and was repeatedly heard to say, that defeat and disaster was all that they could expect in the unjust war in which they were engaged. Hence the extravagant hopes with which he listened to the

tale of Montrose's victories in the north; victories which, while they ensured to the conqueror an immortality of personal renown, produced no permanent effect upon the general issues of the war. But the term of resistance, on the part of the Royalists, was already near at hand. When the season for active operations returned, the Parliamentarians presented in all quarters so decided a superiority, that the hearts of the bravest began to fail, and the lapse of a few weeks sufficed to prove that the most gloomy of these anticipations were but too well founded.

The disposition of the forces on both sides, in the beginning of 1645, was as follows:—Of the Scottish army a part was employed in the reduction of Pomfret and other places in Yorkshire; a part carried on the siege of Carlisle, which made an obstinate defence. Chester, into which lord Biron, with the remains of the troops, had thrown himself, was closely blockaded, and reduced to great extremities. In Somersetshire, sir Richard Granville, at the head of eight thousand cavaliers, invested the town of Taunton; while in the western counties Goring, with a corps of a similar strength, committed great excesses, both on friends and foes. But the armies on which mainly depended the fate of the war were those commanded on the one side by Charles, on the other by Fairfax and Cromwell, of which the former, occupying Oxford, fell somewhat short of fifteen thousand men, while the latter, posted at Windsor and in the villages near, amounted to twenty-two thousand. Yet it was not in the numbers so much as in the composition of their troops that the parliamentary leaders possessed now a decided advantage. The new organization given to their battalions, if it rendered them somewhat less imposing on the muster-roll, had effectually weeded them of all except men of tried courage and resolution; they consisted entirely of Independents in religion, fanatics in the widest sense of the term,

who accounted wounds meritorious, and death for the cause in which they were embarked a sure passport into heaven. The Royalists, on the contrary, dissolute from the first, were becoming more and more forgetful of the commonest rules of discipline every day, while many of them longed for peace with a degree of ardour, which at least diminished, if it could not extinguish, their zeal in war. This feeling, indeed, together with the estrangements and feuds which had for some time prevailed among the superior officers, rendered the king's military means the reverse of formidable. Nevertheless he put his trust in Providence, and on the 7th of May, anticipated the designs of his enemies, by marching out of Oxford, and taking the road to Chester.

Five weeks spent in marches and countermarches, during which some towns were taken and others relieved on both sides, brought the armies of the king and of Fairfax into presence, at the village of Naseby, about ten miles distant from Northampton. Both sides were eager to engage, and a battle took place, in which, after displaying prodigies of valour, the Royalists were totally routed. All the king's artillery and baggage, his cabinet containing copies of his correspondence, and his private carriage, fell into the hands of the conquerors, who made at the same time not fewer than four thousand five hundred prisoners, of whom five hundred were officers. Nor were the evil consequences of this defeat confined to the loss immediately sustained, little as the royal cause was calculated to bear up even against that. A universal panic seized upon the Cavaliers in all quarters. Town after town opened its gates. Bristol, into which prince Rupert had thrown himself, and which he undertook to maintain for four months, capitulated at the first appearance of an enemy. Bridgewater, Chester, Sherborne, and Bath, surrendered. Goring, driven away from his lines before Taunton, became powerless and fugitive; and the whole of the

west, including the important city of Exeter, was reduced in like manner. Lord Digby, who, with twelve hundred horse, made a bold attempt to join Montrose in Scotland, was intercepted at Sherburn in Yorkshire, and his people dispersed; and lord Astley, while marching to reinforce the king with three thousand men, received a total overthrow at Stow in Oxfordshire. "You have done your work," said the gallant nobleman, himself a prisoner in the hands of the Parliamentary officers, "and, unless you choose to fall out among yourselves, may now go play."

Meanwhile the king, after passing from post to post, took refuge at Oxford, where he soon became a prey to all the distress and anxiety which his situation was well calculated to produce. Harassed on the one hand by fears for his friends, and tormented on the other by the insolence of his enemies, he vainly endeavoured to save the one, and to mitigate the rancour of the other, by renewed offers of an accommodation. The Parliament returned no answer to his repeated overtures; they would not so much as grant him a personal safe-conduct to London, and issued orders for his arrest, in case he should attempt clandestinely to visit them. It was to no purpose that in the extremity of his despair he looked to Ireland and its Popish population for succour. He found in lord Glamorgan a willing though a rash agent, one who with chivalrous loyalty stood ready to risk not life alone, but reputation, in his sovereign's defence. But the tide had set in with a degree of violence which no obstacles could interrupt, and each new project scarce came to maturity ere it was frustrated. Even the hopes which he entertained from the animosities that prevailed among the Parliamentarians failed. Though at bitter enmity among themselves, the Presbyterians and Independents equally agreed in this, that it was their duty, not less than their wisdom, to

crush the common enemy, and to prevent him from combating one faction by means of another.

Such were Charles's views and such his situation, when in the beginning of 1646 intelligence reached him, that Fairfax was advancing at the head of a numerous army for the purpose of investing Oxford. Almost at the same time he heard of the defeat of Montrose at Philip-haugh, and of the arrival of the Scottish army before Newark, while each new hour brought him fresh rumours of the dispersion of his partisans wherever they attempted to rally or show a front. It was now that the arguments of the French minister, Montreville, supported by a mistaken estimate of the national feeling in his favour, induced him to take a step from which there could be no retracting. There was nothing of which he exhibited so great a horror as that he should fall alive into the hands of the Parliament. To avoid this, he determined to throw himself on the generosity of the Scots, and to trust to the impression which such an act of confidence might produce to ensure a friendly welcome. Charles was not a man accustomed to form resolutions which he never designed to carry into effect; he therefore seized the first convenient opportunity that offered, to withdraw from his quarters. On the 8th of May, after a perilous journey, which carried him through the midst of Fairfax's posts, the king, attended only by Dr. Hudson, a clergyman, by Mr. Ashburnham, and three servants, arrived at the Scottish camp, where his reception was such, as to convince him that however respectful they might be in their demeanour, he was not regarded, either by officers or men, otherwise than as a prisoner.

It would be tedious to relate the many insults and indignities to which, during his sojourn in the Scottish camp, the king was subjected. Not satisfied with

exactng from him such orders as caused his adherents everywhere to lay down their arms, the Scottish generals compelled him to listen, even during divine service, to the most vehement harangues against tyranny; while, in conjunction with commissioners from the English parliament, they offered to him such terms of reconciliation as a vanquished monarch might expect at the hands of victorious rebels. The English parliament, however, though they refused not to join their Scottish brethren in this business, were far more intent on getting the person of the king intrusted to their own keeping. They tried menace, but it availed not,—they tried an appeal to principle and to vanity, with the like bad success,—they offered a sum of money for the surrender of the captive, and it was accepted. The Scots, having stipulated for the payment of 400,000*l.*, of which a portion was secured at the time, gave up the king into the hands of his enemies; and withdrew, covered with disgrace, even in the eyes of those who corrupted them, into their own country.

From Newcastle, whither the Scots had conveyed him, Charles was conducted, under an escort, to Holdenby Castle in Northamptonshire. Here, though permitted to pursue such occupations as he might choose, he was strictly watched; all access to him being prohibited, except under a warrant from the commissioners; and here, unaided as he was by the advice of any of his counsellors, he was required once more to enter into a negotiation, of which the terms became from day to day more repulsive to his principles. Charles carried his concessions now to the utmost limits which any regard to the monarchical principle would allow. He consented to confirm the ascendancy of the Presbyterian discipline for three years, on condition that freedom of conscience should be allowed to Episcopalians; and that at the end of the term he should be permitted, with the advice of his parliament, to settle the affairs

of the church on a permanent basis. Of the army and navy he gave up the command for ten years; and he pledged himself to give full satisfaction with respect to the war in Ireland. But such a conquest, however acceptable it might have been to those who had the welfare of the country really at heart, fell far short of the wishes and expectations of the ruling faction. The Lords received the king's message favourably, and voted that he should be removed to Oatlands; the Commons took no notice of the subject, till it became too late to notice it effectually.

I have had occasion to speak more than once of the two parties into which the lower house of parliament was divided. The Presbyterians, as it is perhaps unnecessary to explain, were those who advocated the establishment of a national religion, and desired to erect it after the model of the church of Scotland, with a General Assembly, Synods, and Presbyteries. The Independents, assuming that all men stand in the same relation towards God, denied that there was any occasion either for a national church, or a clergy, and contended that it was free to any one, provided only he experienced an inward call, to take the lead at any moment among his brethren, in the exercises of prayer and preaching. In the house, the Presbyterians were as yet the prevailing faction; in the army—but especially in that portion of it of which Fairfax and Cromwell were in command—the tenets of Independency greatly preponderated. There were, indeed, very few even of the private soldiers who were not tinctured with its principles, and of the officers, almost all taught them openly. To a House of Commons so constituted, an army composed of such materials became, now that the king was powerless, an object of violent suspicion. It was determined to disband the troops, and as a measure preparatory to this, a portion were ordered to prepare for immediate service against the Papists in Ire-

land. But the army, well schooled by the leaders whom the self-denying ordinance had given, experienced no inclination to submit to these mandates. They remonstrated; claimed large arrears of pay,—refused to quit their lines or separate,—and finally established among themselves a sort of parliament of their own, of which delegates from the ranks composed one chamber, and a certain number elected from among the officers, the other.

Of this daring movement,—of which it may be doubted whether he as yet beheld the ultimate effect,—Oliver Cromwell, the most distinguished, as well as the most popular, of the military leaders, was the author. The son of a brewer in Huntingdon, though descended from a good family, this man, in spite of a forbidding aspect, and an imperfect elocution, had raised himself, by the exercise of consummate hardihood and address, from the rank of a private citizen to his present elevated position. He sat for the first time in the parliament of 1628, as member for his native borough; and made himself conspicuous by his hostility to the established church. In 1640, and again in 1641, the citizens of Cambridge elected him as their representative, and he became immediately one of the most able, as well as one of the most daring, assailants of all that yet remained of royal prerogative. Cromwell's genius, however, fitted him not less to shine in the field, than to lead in the senate-house; and his perspicacity early led him to anticipate, that in the field the questions at issue between the king and his parliament must be decided. He therefore began, long before to others the necessity was apparent, to make ready for the contest; and came forth all at once the captain of a troop of horse, against which no portion of Charles's army was ever able successfully to make head.

Deep, designing, and long-sighted, Cromwell was not slow in establishing an ascendancy over the minds of

all with whom he became associated. Of Essex and Manchester, and other titled soldiers, he early entertained a jealousy,—and of the mode by which he succeeded in removing them out of his way an account has already been given. The self-denying ordinance was a creature of his brain, and served admirably in its working, to advance his purposes. Fairfax, on the contrary, was all along a tool in his hands, which he used rather to blind the eyes of the parliament, than to direct the troops; for Cromwell made use of more than common means to confirm his own supremacy over the superior officers and soldiers. Like them he was an Independent,—he took part in their prayer-meetings, entered into all their feelings,—pitied their sufferings, exclaimed against their wrongs; and now that the fitting moment had arrived, made use of them to overturn a government, of the hostility of which he was aware, and whose weakness he despised.

For some time after the murmurs of the soldiers began to be heard, Cromwell appears to have disguised his own intentions from the Commons; among whom he took his seat as usual, and before whom, he lamented the evils with which his country was threatened. He was accordingly nominated, along with Skippon, Ireton, and Fleetwood, as member of a commission, of which it was the business to inquire into the grievances of the army, and he proceeded, on the 7th of May, 1647, to the head-quarters at Saffron Walden, in Essex. But ere he reached the lines, affairs had taken a new aspect, owing to the accomplishment of a design, which also originated with himself. One Joyce, originally a tailor, now a cornet of horse in Fairfax's army, had proceeded, at the head of five hundred men, to Holdenby; and in spite of the remonstrance of the commissioners, had seized the king's person, and removed him to the camp. Now then was Cromwell master of an instrument which he well knew how to wield with effect. He openly

espoused the cause of the army against the Commons, affected to enter into a treaty with the king,—commanded that every indulgence should be granted him, and, putting the troops in motion, marched into London.

The alarm of the Commons was not more excited than the hopes of the unfortunate king, when they became aware of this movement. The former strove to rouse the citizens in their defence, and failing in this, endeavoured to mollify the rebels by concession; the latter flattered himself that the time had at length arrived, when the necessities of his enemies themselves would restore him to power. But, in proportion as he freed himself from the pressure of his personal rivals, Cromwell gradually relaxed in the court which he paid to the king. The parliament had recently admitted into its body upwards of a hundred new members. Such of these as were most obnoxious to the Independents, as well as all who aided the Presbyterians, were expelled,—while Cromwell, after lodging the king at Hampton Court, and affecting to treat with him about an earldom for himself, and other minor matters, suddenly ceased to hold with him any personal intercourse. The king was surprised. His surprise partook of alarm, when he beheld his guards doubled, and heard from those about him that his life was in danger. All this seemed to be inexplicable,—inasmuch as the good will of the general had not only permitted the attendance of one of his own chaplains, but had procured for him the happiness of once more embracing his children, the dukes of York and Gloucester, and the princess Elizabeth. Nevertheless, being persuaded by those who, perhaps, did not wish him well, that Cromwell was himself an object of suspicion, he determined to make one effort more for deliverance, and, attended only by three friends, quitted Hampton Court unobserved, on the 11th of November. His fate was a sad

one. Ignorant whither to betake himself, he trusted to the generosity of Hammond, the son-in-law of Hampden, the friend of Cromwell, and the governor of the Isle of Wight; and he became, as a matter of course, a prisoner in Carisbrooke Castle; subject, at first, to nothing more than a respectful vigilance, but by and by, to the most rigid confinement.

Meanwhile the spirit which he had himself excited, gained so perfect an ascendancy in the army, that Cromwell found his Independents almost as unmanageable as either the king or the parliament. The agitators, as the delegates were termed, continued to meet and to discuss all questions, both of civil and military policy, with a freedom which accorded ill with the views of their master. They were commanded to disperse. They refused obedience, and a spirit of insubordination exhibited itself throughout the camp. But to this Cromwell soon put a stop. He ordered a review, seized some of the ringleaders, while standing in line, caused one to be shot as an example to the rest, and at once restored order and discipline. As to the parliament, that was now at his beck; and it only remained to determine how the king should be disposed of.

The merit, such as it is, of suggesting a public trial and execution of the sovereign, seems to rest with Ireton. To the opinions of that man, at once a soldier, a lawyer, a statesman, and a religious enthusiast, Cromwell affected to pay great deference,—and he readily listened to arguments which, under the guise of a strict regard to justice, fell in with the most sanguine of the views which he had ever ventured to encourage. It was necessary, however, to involve the parliament in the guilt of so extraordinary a transaction, and with this view they were led to commence again a treaty of reconciliation, on a basis of which no man could anticipate the acceptance. But the sentiments of the ma-

jority of the Commons were, by this time, considerably changed. They beheld with alarm the growing power of Cromwell, and the absolute control which he exercised over the minds of the troops; and greatly as they disliked the idea of the king's restoration, they would have preferred even that to subjection under the yoke of the army. Though, therefore, they voted that all correspondence with the king should cease, the hearts of the majority went not with their voices; and they seized the first opportunity that offered, to rescind the determination. Nor did a great while elapse ere the wished-for opportunity was afforded.

The misfortunes of Charles, not less than the tyranny of the parliament, which, governing by committees, set all laws at defiance, had for some time excited a strong wish, in the minds of the people, to reestablish the kingly power. This was the great motive in England, while in Scotland, abhorrence of Independency, and an earnest desire to establish the Presbyterian church, operated with equal, if not with greater power. The Scots had sent commissioners, together with those from the parliament at Westminster, to treat with Charles touching his restoration; and a rumour obtained circulation that the king had subscribed to the Covenant, and that Cromwell and his troops were now the sole obstacles to the settlement of the empire. With one voice both the parliament and the general assembly proclaimed a crusade in support of God and the king; and multitudes, responding to the call, offered to serve in so holy a cause. But when a true statement of the case arrived, and it became known that Charles assented only to a temporary establishment of Presbyterianism, the enthusiasm which had at first been excited, began to abate. Still the duke of Hamilton, himself a moderate Presbyterian and a monarchist, succeeded in drawing together an army, respectable in point of numbers; while the gallant Montrose hoisted at once the royal standard,

about which three thousand men assembled. Immediately the Cavaliers throughout England and Wales, as well as many who till now had taken no side in the quarrel, grasped their weapons; and even of the fleet, a considerable portion declared for the king, and went over to put themselves under the command of the duke of York, then a resident at the Hague.

Nothing daunted by the appearance of danger, Cromwell, Fairfax, and the other chiefs of the independent faction, made ready for the struggle. The army was largely reinforced; but as its services were needed in many quarters at the same time, London was unavoidably given up to the protection of the Train-bands, and the Parliament recovered for a brief space its authority. The first use which the Commons made of their recovered influence, was to recall their expelled members; the next, to begin again the treaty with the king, which had so recently been broken off. Charles knew that he must yield to their demands, and he did so as far as his conscience would allow. He gave up everything, the army, the right of appointing to all offices, the control over the revenue,—all, indeed, except the lives and fortunes of his devoted friends, and the existence of the apostolical order. But though the parliament, after much debate, agreed to treat upon this basis, no good either to them or to Charles resulted from the concession. The Independents were already victorious over all their enemies. The absurd fanaticism of the Scots hindered them from acting as one body with the English royalists, and both were cut to pieces in detail; while the movements made in Kent, in Essex, in Wales, and elsewhere, were all put down. Immediately the violence of the conquerors was turned against both king and parliament. The former, being seized, was conveyed from Newport to Hurst Castle; the latter were threatened with summary vengeance if they refused to give satisfaction to the people of Eng-

land, even by the blood of a royal delinquent. Finally, the Commons, presenting a bold front, and denouncing Fairfax and his colleagues as traitors, one colonel Pride was despatched with two battalions to bring them to order; and his summary method of expelling all such members as consented not to adopt the views of his superiors, has ever since been commemorated as Pride's Purge. About fifty persons only were left in the house to represent the Commons of England; and these, as it is scarcely necessary to add, were the tools of Cromwell and his faction.

The government of England was now entirely vested in the army; from whose members a species of council was selected, which, under the appellation of *Grandeess*, dictated, in the form of a petition, the course which it behoved the Parliament to pursue. These persons thirsted for the king's blood; and being unwilling to incur the charge of secret assassination, they demanded that he should be publicly arraigned at the bar of the English people. The "*Rump*," (such was the term applied to the remnant of the House of Commons,) was too servile to resist this demand; and a bill was passed, which declared it treason in a king to levy war against his people, and appointed a High Court of Justiciary to try Charles Stuart for this new offence. During the progress of the Civil War, the House of Peers had acted a very subordinate part; of late, they were become altogether contemptible; but on this occasion they displayed a gleam of their ancient glory; and, without one dissentient voice, rejected the proposition. Immediately the Commons voted by acclamation, that in themselves, as the choice of the people, all power was vested; and the ordinance for the trial of Charles Stuart of England was pronounced valid, in defiance of an opposition which no man any longer regarded.

From his prison at Hurst Castle, the king was conveyed to Windsor, amid the pitying gaze of the

populace, now everywhere restored to their senses. He was removed thence, on the 19th of December, to Whitehall, and on the 24th of January, 1649, found himself arraigned in Westminster-hall, before the commissioners appointed by parliament to judge between him and his accusers. Out of one hundred and thirty-three persons elected to this invidious office, only sixty-nine answered to their names. John Bradshaw, a sergeant at law, was their president; Cromwell, Ireton, and Harrison, were among the members; and Coke, Steele, and Aske, acted as solicitors for the people. I need not add that the trial was the merest mockery. At first, indeed, the calm and dignified demeanour of the king overawed, in some degree, his persecutors, while his refusal to recognise the authority under which they acted, delayed the proceedings three whole days; but his fate had long ago been determined on, and no one now interposed to avert it. On the 27th, the court, after hearing a few witnesses, passed upon him sentence of death, and signed the warrant for its execution.

Nothing could exceed the interest which the very mob appeared to take in these extraordinary proceedings. As he went to and from the court to his lodgings, the populace greeted him with blessings; and even among the soldiery one voice was heard to repeat the benediction. The man was instantly struck to the earth by his officer, while others, who spat in the king's face, received commendation. But neither insults nor expressions of pity could shake the firmness of the royal martyr. He spent most of his hours in devotion, or in conversing with Juxon, bishop of London. Of the members of his family, only two, the young duke of Gloucester, and the princess Elizabeth, were now in England; and as they were not debarred from his society, the king derived much consolation from the opportunity which was afforded, of giving to them his

dying advice. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that his son Charles, prince of Wales, used every exertion to save his father's life; sending over a sheet of paper signed by his own hand, and duly sealed, with instructions to Fairfax and Cromwell to fill it up as they chose. But it was now too late to recede. On the 30th of January, Charles was conducted to the scaffold—a temporary erection in front of the palace of Whitehall—where, after forgiving his enemies, praying for the welfare of his country, and avowing himself a member of the Protestant church of England as it had been committed to him by his father, he laid his head upon the block, and died by a single blow.

It is not necessary to conclude this account of the reign of the first Charles with any laboured analysis of his character as a sovereign or a man. Faults he doubtless had, in whatever capacity we regard him; for his manners, though correct, were austere; his truth sometimes questionable; and his love of power, derived from the tuition of his father, very great. But Charles lived in times of no common difficulty. Had he found his first parliament less encroaching, it is probable that his rule would have been more gentle, and better in accordance with the growing spirit of freedom; as it was, his prejudices came so early into collision with those of his people, that a reconciliation at any future period was rendered next to impossible. With respect, again, to the faction which persecuted him even to the death, but one opinion, can now be formed. They were no friends to public liberty; for never, under the most arbitrary monarch, were the people of England subject to a more rigid tyranny; neither did they compose the majority of the nation, which, at least latterly, had recovered its reverence for the person of the king. Even of the commissioners appointed to sit in judgment on him, scarcely one half could be induced to attend at his trial; and

many of those who concurred in his condemnation, subscribed the sentence with feelings of shame and remorse. But it is ever so in revolutions. A few violent men take the lead; their noise and their activity seem to multiply their numbers; and the great body of the people, either indolent or pusillanimous, are led in triumph at the chariot-wheels of a paltry faction.

The execution of the king was followed by many important changes in the constitution of the country. The House of Lords was abolished; monarchy was denounced as illegal; and a new great seal formed, on which was engraved this legend: "The first year of freedom, by God's blessing restored, 1648." All public business was thenceforth to be carried on in the names of the Keepers of the Liberties of England, and it was declared high-treason to proclaim or any otherwise acknowledge Charles Stuart, commonly called prince of Wales. In the same spirit, the king's statue in the Royal Exchange was thrown down, and on the pedestal were engraved the words "Exit tyrannus, Regum ultimus." Nor was the sword of vengeance sheathed after it had drunk royal blood. The duke of Hamilton, the lord Capel, the earl of Holland, a traitor to both parties, were executed, together with many others of less note in different parts of the empire.

The era of Charles is memorable as being that of Milton, our great poet; of Hyde, lord Clarendon, the faithful historian of his own times; of Jeremy Taylor, Dr. Hammond, and other distinguished writers. Neither must I omit to give to Charles himself the praise which is his due as the author of the *Icon Basilike*, a work of the most affecting merit. I speak of him as the undoubted author, because the claims of Gauden seem to be now generally given up*; while of the

* I am aware that Mr. Hallam holds a different opinion; but Dr. Wordsworth's reasoning seems to me unanswerable.

work itself, it may be sufficient to observe, that Milton compared its effects to those wrought on the Roman people by the reading of Cæsar's will. Some, indeed, have not scrupled to attribute, in a great measure, to it, the restoration of the royal family. Be this, however, as it may, we know that the work passed through fifty editions within the short period of one year; and that it has ever since been accounted one of the best prose compositions to which the era or Charles the First gave birth.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REPUBLIC.—STATE OF PARTIES.—AFFAIRS OF IRELAND AND OF SCOTLAND.—BATTLE OF WORCESTER.—CROMWELL'S AMBITION.—HE DISSOLVES THE LONG PARLIAMENT.—BECOMES PROTECTOR.—REFUSES THE CROWN.—A NEW PARLIAMENT—REFRACTORY.—HE GOVERNS WITHOUT A PARLIAMENT.—HIS DEATH.—RICHARD CROMWELL—HIS WEAKNESS.—LONG PARLIAMENT RESTORED.—THE COMMITTEE OF SAFETY.—GENERAL MONK.—THE RESTORATION.

[A.D. 1649, to A.D. 1660.]

THE immediate effect of the execution of Charles the First was to loosen, everywhere throughout the kingdom, the bonds of order and good government. The wildest fanatics, both in civil and religious matters, took the lead, and the fabric of society was, for a space, shaken to its very basis. Amid this apparent confusion, however, there still existed three powerful parties who beheld one another with implacable hostility, and soon began to struggle for pre-eminence. There were the Royalists, who, though defeated and broken, ceased not to watch with anxiety the fortunes of their young master; there were the Presbyterians, whom hostility towards the Independents induced to forget minor differences, and cast their eyes in the same direction; and there were the Independents or Republicans, the immediate authors of all the crimes and misery which had overspread the country. These last were, indeed, comparatively few in number, but what they wanted in numerical strength, they made up by energy of character; and above all, they were supported by the army; in times of public trouble by far the most efficient ally to such as possess sufficient talent to wield it. Nor was such talent wanting now. Cromwell had long established the supremacy of his own influence in

the camp; and he saw that the time had arrived when it behoved him to exercise it.

With such feelings everywhere prevalent, it is scarcely necessary to say, that the rule of the parliament was very uneasily borne by the people at large. It was in Scotland; however, that the symptoms of a disposition to resist first displayed themselves. When they delivered over the king into the hands of the parliamentary commissioners, the Scots had taken a pledge for his personal safety; and they had strongly remonstrated against his trial and execution, so soon as a report of the intended proceeding reached them. They now made haste to proclaim Charles the Second, whom they invited to subscribe to their covenant, and promised, under certain restrictions, to acknowledge as their sovereign; and nothing doubting that the invitation would be accepted, they took up arms in his name. But startling as this state of things might be, the danger in Ireland, now in open and prosperous rebellion, was considered by the government to be still more urgent. It was resolved, therefore, to begin by reducing the latter country to subjection; and Cromwell, who, for obvious reasons, desired to be again at the head of an armed force, intrigued for, and obtained, the commission of lieutenant, with absolute authority.

I have said that Ireland was in confusion, and that the government in London determined to reduce it to obedience. It is necessary that I should explain both the nature of the power which had succeeded in England to the monarchy, and the chief causes of the obstinacy of the Irish in refusing to acknowledge its supremacy.

With the death of Charles expired the last vestige of that monarchical system under which the English people had lived from the earliest ages, and to which they were, in all ages, warmly attached. The privileges of the hereditary peerage, also, which had, for some time past,

been rather nominal than real, ceased altogether; inso-much that there were not wanting instances of degenerate nobles, who took their seats as the representatives of counties in the House of Commons. In that house, then, all power virtually centered; though, having been weeded of every member against whom a suspicion of attachment to old things lay, there were never counted more than seventy individuals present at a debate. Still, as the House of Commons could not claim to be regarded except as a legislative body, it was considered necessary to create an executive also; and the names of forty-one persons, the most conspicuous for their abhorrence of royalty, were given in, as of men qualified to form a council of Regency. Out of these forty-one, however, only nineteen would consent to act, because there were but nineteen, including fourteen regicides, who could bring themselves to subscribe a test, which declared their approbation of all that had been done about the king and the kingly office. Such was the new constitution which a victorious and bloody faction set up; and of which they unscrupulously declared their intention of extending the authority not only over England and Ireland, but over Scotland also.

The Scots, who though they had given a sovereign to England, still regarded themselves as an independent people, experienced no inclination to yield their necks to the yoke; they proclaimed, as I have just related, Charles the Second, and made ready to maintain their liberty by force of arms. The Irish, likewise, though subject, by right of conquest, to the English dominion, were exceedingly averse to obey the usurpers. The marquess of Ormond, a man of tried courage and loyalty, after a painful struggle with the bigoted popish chiefs, had succeeded in introducing something like union into their counsels; and the parliamentary troops being few, and of doubtful fidelity, his successes were for a time considerable. It was in

this emergency that Cromwell received a commission to act in Ireland at the head of twelve thousand men. He hastened the equipment of the corps; for it was not unknown to him that the young king entertained serious ideas of joining Ormond in the field; and Cromwell was too profound a calculator not to be aware of the moral consequences which were likely to follow such a procedure. But ere he reached his field of operations, the danger was in a great degree past, inasmuch as Ormond had permitted himself to be surprised while investing Dublin, and suffered a total defeat. All, therefore, that was left for Cromwell to accomplish, may be considered as the gleanings of the harvest; and he did his work here, as he did it everywhere, ruthlessly and effectually.

About the middle of August, 1649, Cromwell commenced operations with the siege of Tredah, which he carried by assault, putting the whole of the garrison to the sword. A similar fate befell Wexford, under circumstances of even greater atrocity; indeed his campaign was one of sieges only, for the royalists never recovered the disaster at Dublin, and showed no force in the field. A few terrible examples, moreover, so intimidated the king's garrisons, that one after another they submitted, the men passing into the ranks of the republican army, and so making good the losses which war and sickness had occasioned. Two brief campaigns, thus conducted, sufficed to reduce Ireland to a state of order, which was the less likely to be interrupted that Ormond fled over sea, and was followed, at short intervals, by forty thousand of the most restless and turbulent of the people. But Cromwell was not permitted to repose upon the laurels which he had won. There were dangers threatening in other quarters, and this child of the revolution, as, like Napoleon, he may justly be termed, hastened to oppose himself to them also.

Charles the Second had, by the care of his father, been early removed from the perils of an unsuccessful contest. He had resided sometimes in France, sometimes in the Low Countries; and he received at Breda the deputation which the Scots sent over for the purpose of inviting him to their shores. While the king negotiated with these envoys, his gallant supporter, Montrose, gathered together a band of five hundred men, and threw himself ashore at Caithness. Among all the gentlemen who fought under the royal standard, there was not one to be compared, in point either of courage or of conduct, to Montrose. At a period when, in every other quarter, fortune frowned upon the cause, his influence and resolution had kept the hopes of the party alive in Scotland; and he laid down his arms at last, only in obedience to that mandate which the unhappy monarch was induced to issue after his flight from Oxford. Having ascertained the nature of the conditions upon which the emissaries from the Scottish parliament were requested to insist, Montrose made up his mind to anticipate the king's acquiescence, and trusting something to the dispositions of the northern clans, and more to the resources of his own genius, he boldly invaded the kingdom by virtue of his commission as royal lieutenant. His fate was a melancholy one. Being destitute of cavalry, and without support from the people of Caithness, he suffered a surprise from a body of horse; and his followers being dispersed, he himself, with the greater proportion of his officers, fell a prisoner into their hands. He was conducted to Edinburgh, amid every imaginable species of ignominy, and, being arraigned and condemned as a traitor, suffered death.

The fall of Montrose took from Charles the last hope which he had ventured to encourage, that he might yet recover, with even the semblance of regal power, a footing in his native country. He felt that there was no

longer a choice left, except either to accede to the propositions made to him by the Scots, or to continue an exile till the day of his death. He chose the former alternative, and passing over to Edinburgh, became at once an object of insult to the preachers, and of the harshest and most unfeeling treatment to the nobility and people. They forced him to subscribe the Covenant, compelled him to do penance for his own sins, and for the sins of his father and his grandfather; and gave many other proofs, both to himself and those around him, that he was used only as a pageant, for party purposes. Nevertheless, as men of all stations ran to arms, and a force, formidable in point of numbers, hoisted the king's standard, a good deal of uneasiness was experienced in London, more especially when it was found that Fairfax, a bigoted Presbyterian, refused to take command of the troops with which it had been pronounced necessary to invade Scotland. Under these circumstances, Cromwell was recalled, and he, after a pretended effort to overcome the general's scruples, readily put himself at the head of sixteen thousand men, with whom he marched northward.

For a while the Scots, over whom Lesley, an old and experienced soldier of the Dutch school, held universal sway, defended themselves with equal valour and address. They shunned a general action; and taking up a strong position, so as to cover Edinburgh, wore out the patience of the invaders by hunger and frequent skirmishes. So severe, indeed, were Cromwell's sufferings, that he was forced to retire; and shut himself up in Dunbar, an open town, which lies between a semicircle of hills and the sea. Of that semicircle Lesley took possession, and had his counsels been followed, Dunbar must have been, without doubt, the scene of Cromwell's overthrow. But they were not followed. A fanatical clergy, working upon the minds

of a fanatical soldiery, compelled him, on the third of September, to offer a battle,—which the invaders thankfully accepted, and won with the utmost facility.

The effect of this defeat was not, upon the whole, unfavourable to the royal cause; for it induced the Scots to unbend somewhat from their absurdities,—and throw more power into the hands of Charles,—but it was soon followed by other events, each more and more decisive of the struggle. Lesley, out-manceuvred at the Tor Wood, found himself cut off from his supplies, and at the earnest solicitation of the young king, marched boldly into England. He was followed with the utmost promptitude by Cromwell, who overtook him at Worcester, and attacking him in a position of extraordinary strength, gave him a complete overthrow. Charles had urged the march southward, under the belief that he would be joined, as he proceeded, by crowds of Englishmen. He was deceived,—for very few gathered under his standard; but if their loyalty was not sufficient to carry them into the field, it displayed itself in a very striking manner after the king's defeat. Charles's adventures, during forty-one days which were passed by him as a fugitive, surpass all that the most fertile imagination of the writer of a romance could devise. Once he escaped detection by sheltering himself amid the bushy foliage of an oak-tree; he was repeatedly disguised as a peasant, and sometimes as a woman. Upwards of forty persons were privy to these devices, and all of them knew that a single act of treachery on their parts would suffice to enrich their families for ever. Yet they kept his secret with the most honourable fidelity, and guided him to the coast. He took ship at Shoreham, in Sussex, and landed at Fescamp, in Normandy.

The battle of Worcester may be said to have fully established the authority of the parliament over every part of the British islands. It is true, that both in

Scotland and Ireland, resistance continued for a while to be made; but the former country was soon reduced to obedience by general Monk, the latter by Ireton and Ludlow, successively commanders-in-chief in the room of Cromwell. Abroad, too, the daring band of usurpers who swayed the energies of England caused themselves to be respected; for their fleet, besides reducing the English settlements in America, chased prince Rupert from the seas,—chastised the king of Portugal for affording him shelter, and maintained a fierce and advantageous struggle with the Dutch. The house of Orange, it is necessary to observe, had exhibited a strong interest in the fate of the royal family of England; and the States treated coldly the advances of the Commonwealth to a closer union. This was enough to provoke the hostility of men, whose avidity of deference was sharpened by a well-grounded conviction, that in the prosecution of a foreign war lay their best chance of repressing divisions and discontents at home. But though Blake and his gallant companions well supported the honour of their country in numerous battles, the Republicans soon found that they had mistaken the temper of the people, when they imagined that in the contemplation of military glory, they would forget the pressure of grievances at home. Men clamoured for those reforms in the system of representation which they had been promised. They called upon the parliament to fulfil its pledge, by dissolving itself, now the civil war was at an end; and neither violence nor chicanery sufficed to allay the discontent, which began day by day to assume a more threatening aspect. That, however, which gave the finishing blow to their influence, was an insane attempt to disband the army,—a body of which they had become, not without reason, afraid, because they saw that it was no longer under their control.

Well aware of all that was going on, and alive to the dangers which menaced himself, Cromwell, strong

in the renown which his "crowning victory" had earned, resolved to throw aside the mask at once. He summoned a council of officers, ascertained that he could depend upon their devotion, and induced them to remonstrate, in strong terms, against the proceedings of the parliament. Complaints were made of the large arrears of pay due to the troops; and the parliament was reminded, that though it had done good service, the time was come when it ought to give place to another. Even this remonstrance, however, produced no effect, for the members met as usual, and passed a resolution that they ought not to dissolve themselves, but rather fill up the vacancies in their number by new elections. It was now that Cromwell, with a strong arm, resolved to put an end to the controversy. Taking with him a body of three hundred soldiers, he repaired, on the 20th of April, to the house, and leaving the guards outside the door, assumed his seat where he was accustomed to find it. He listened to the debate for a while, but just as the question was going to be put, he exclaimed aloud, to his friend Harrison, who was near, "This is the time,—I must do it." Immediately he sprang up, and poured out a volume of abuse, both upon the assembly at large, and upon particular members. "For shame," cried he, stamping his foot as a signal for the soldiers to enter, "get you gone, and make way for better men. You are no longer a parliament, I tell you, you are no longer a parliament. The Lord has done with you, he has chosen other instruments to do his work." He then commanded a halberdier to seize the mace, which he called "a fool's bauble," and driving out the members before him, locked the doors of the house, put the key in his pocket, and returned to his lodgings at Whitehall.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

THUS ended, amid the derision and contempt of a disappointed people, an experiment in the science of government, as daring as it was ill arranged, as unprofitable as it was iniquitous. The usual consequences, moreover, of such a state of things succeeded; for the very semblance of liberty was set aside, by the iron hand of military despotism. Cromwell, without condescending to solicit the advice of any except his armed partisans, assumed, at once, more than the rights of a conqueror. He issued summonses to one hundred and twenty-eight persons, of different towns and counties of England, to five of Scotland, and to six of Ireland,—and by his sole act and deed devolved upon them the semblance of supreme authority over the state. He determined that they should exercise their legislative functions during a space of fifteen months, at the close of which they were to select a like number of persons, who should succeed them in their high office. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the utmost care was taken that no one should obtain a seat in the new parliament, of whose devotion to its author any doubts could be entertained.

There was a man in this body, by name Praise God Barebones, a Puritan of the most inveterate degree, and a leather-seller by trade. From him the whole assembly came shortly to be designated "the Barebone's parliament," by a people who were not slow in discovering both the folly and the meanness of their rulers. Of the system of legislation pursued by such a body, it is not worth while to give an account. Their great object was, according to their own statements, to pave the way for the reign of the Redeemer; and that there might be nothing left which could, by possibility, im-

pede its arrival, they proposed to abolish the clerical functions, and to confiscate the property of the church. They next attacked Learning and the Universities, the Common Law, and the Chancery jurisdictions,—while they seriously proposed to replace all these by the establishment of the Law of Moses. Marriage they pronounced to be a civil ceremony, and ordered it to be contracted in the presence of a magistrate. Nor was their foreign policy marked by greater wisdom than their domestic. They talked of subduing antichrist by force of arms; they rejected the friendship of the Dutch, because they were a worldly people, and determined to begin the great work of universal conversion by their extirpation. But their most grievous offence of all, in the eyes of Cromwell, was the disposition, which they began by degrees to exhibit, of governing as if their authority came not from him, but from God. The same summary method which had been employed for the enlightenment of the Rump, was applied to cure them of the delirium under which they laboured. A body of soldiers ejected them from St. Stephen's, and they were heard of no more.

Once more was the power of the state committed to the hands of the military; and once more they were used to promote the ambitious views of the general. Cromwell was declared Protector of the Commonwealth of England, and invested with more than regal authority, while to assist him a council was appointed, which was not to exceed twenty-one, nor fall short of thirteen members. He was obliged to summon a parliament every three years, and allow them to sit five months without adjournment, prorogation, or dissolution. The bills which the parliament passed were to be presented to the Protector for his assent; but if within twenty days it were not obtained, they were to become laws without it. A standing army, of twenty thousand foot and ten thousand horse, the first which had ever existed

in England, was established, of which the supreme control was given to the Protector, and which, without his consent, could neither be increased nor diminished. But this was not all. The Protector had authority, with the advice of his council, to enact laws during the recesses of parliament; and these were equally binding in Scotland and in Ireland as in England. Such was the new constitution, worked out at a heat for the British empire,—while the members of council appointed to watch over it were, as may be imagined, the mere tools of the Protector.

On the third of September, 1654, Cromwell, who had taken the oaths of office immediately on his appointment, met his first parliament. By what motive influenced, it is hard to say, he had provided for a more popular system of representation than ever before subsisted in this country. Out of four hundred English members, two hundred and seventy were returned by counties; the remainder were elected by London, and the more considerable corporations throughout the kingdom. All small boroughs were disfranchised, and an estate of the value of two hundred pounds was fixed upon as the qualification of an elector. Scotland again sent its thirty members, and Ireland as many, on the same principles; and it is but just to state, that on no previous occasion was more absolute freedom exercised in the choice of the people's representatives.

If Cromwell expected that by these precautions he would succeed in covering his own ambition, and winning upon the confidence of the country, he soon discovered that he was mistaken. The new parliament exhibited so untractable a spirit, that he was compelled to exact from each separate member a pledge that he would not consent to any alteration in the government, as it had been settled in one person; and all who refused to subscribe the declaration, were stopped at the door of the house by an armed guard. Even this

measure, however, failed of its effect; for conspiracies soon began to threaten, and on the 22nd of January, 1655, he dissolved the parliament. Then followed a rash insurrection among the Royalists, who had counted somewhat too much upon the general discontent,—by the suppression of which the hands of the Protector were strengthened, and his authority confirmed. Nor, to say the truth, was that authority exercised, except in individual cases, otherwise than for the public good. All the chief offices in the courts of judicature, for example, were filled with men of integrity; so that amid the virulence of faction, the decrees of the judges were upright; and to every man except himself, and to himself, except where necessity required, the law was the great rule of conduct and behaviour. The army he managed with equal delicacy and address, increasing the pay of the soldiers, supporting a strict discipline, and teaching them to feel that, on the permanence of his rule, their own existence as a body depended. In matters of religion, he was indeed intolerant to Prelatists and Papists; but the Presbyterians he left in possession of such endowments as they had acquired, and to all other sects he granted a perfect freedom of conscience. Over Scotland and Ireland, hitherto the most turbulent portions of the empire, he exercised a perfect control. The civil administration of the former was placed in a council, consisting principally of Englishmen, and justice was dispensed by seven judges, of whom four were Englishmen also. Vassalage he abolished, and by a chain of forts drawn across the island, and a body of one thousand men, constantly in arms, he kept the nobles and chiefs in awe. Even the clergy obeyed him; for he permitted no Church Assemblies to meet, being too conversant with human nature not to perceive that even a fanatical clergy are harmless, except when acting as a body. In like manner, his management of Ireland was characterized

by the utmost display of vigour. He caused a large portion of the land of the country, which had been forfeited in the late struggle, to be occupied by settlers of his own selection; and he even entertained the idea, at one time, of shutting up the native Irish within the compass of the rugged province of Connaught. But though the latter project was abandoned as impracticable, he caused his power to be so keenly felt, that the most turbulent spirits bent before him, and Ireland enjoyed a temporary exemption from, at least, the horrors of civil war.

Meanwhile, the foreign policy of Cromwell; if it exhibited slender marks of foresightedness or wisdom, displayed the same boldness which gave a colouring to his domestic proceedings. He would brook neither neglect nor insult from any power, however formidable. The court of France found it necessary, by coldness and personal indignities, to drive Charles from his asylum in Paris; the court of Madrid, because it failed to prevent an act of private assassination, of which Cromwell's representative, Ascham, became the victim, provoked his fiercest hostility. War was declared,—and Spain, already overmatched both by foreign and domestic enemies, suffered terribly in the struggle. It was on this occasion that the valuable Island of Jamaica passed into the hands of the English, by whom it has ever since been retained. Nevertheless, Cromwell was guilty of a great error in thus humbling a state which had long ceased to be formidable to the rest of Europe; though it might, if judiciously treated, have continued in some measure to hold in check the growing influence of France. But Cromwell was a bigot, like the majority of those about him, and he waged war with Spain, not so much because she had given him grounds of offence, or appeared to thwart his views of aggrandizement or commerce, as because

of all the Popish countries she was the most attached to the religion of Rome.

Hoping that the lustre of his successes abroad would have some influence on the dispositions of men at home, Cromwell ventured, in 1657, to call a second parliament; into which he used every practicable device to ensure the admission of a majority which should be favourable to his own designs. He succeeded, for both Scotland and Ireland returned the nominees of their master; and upwards of a hundred persons were prevented from taking their seats, by an arbitrary edict from the council. By the subservient body thus called together, the pretensions of Charles Stuart were formally denounced, and a tender was made of the regal title and state to the Protector. To be the founder of a new race of kings, had long been the object of Cromwell's ambition. For that he had waded through oceans of blood, and now that the prize seemed placed within his reach, it could be no consideration of trifling weight, which induced him to reject it. Not only the principal officers of the army were averse to it, but the very members of his own family,—Fleetwood, who had married his daughter, and Desborow, who had married his sister, declared against his acceptance of the regal dignity. They told him that if he assumed the crown, they would throw up their commissions, and never have it in their power to serve him again. Cromwell wavered long and painfully, but at last, ambition yielded to prudence; and he was content to receive a solemn inauguration in Westminster Abbey, as Protector for life.

On the 26th of June, the parliament prorogued itself; and did not meet again till the 20th of January, 1658. During that interval, the Protector made an effort to re-establish a House of Peers, by summoning together six or eight of the ancient nobles, several

gentlemen of fortune and influence, and some of his own officers, who had risen from the meanest stations. It was an unwise measure in two points of view, for it not only recalled to men's minds the constitution of other days, but it lost to the Protector, by the removal of many of his best friends into the House of Peers, the majority which he had hitherto commanded in the Commons. The consequence was, that he soon found himself, with reference to his second parliament, in a much worse plight than with his first, and he had again recourse to the most summary of all methods of relief, by dissolving the refractory body.

From this period (February 4th), up to the day of his death, Cromwell governed without any other counsel than that which his own courage and his own talents afforded. On the continent, he continued to command the respect both of friends and enemies; for his troops, as if inspired with the spirit of their chief, never fought except to conquer. But at home, he was continually alarmed by the report of plots and intrigues, of which many were, doubtless, real, and many, perhaps, pretended. It is, however, certain that he became from day to day more and more an object of aversion to the people. The Royalists hated him as a usurper; the Presbyterians abhorred him as a persecutor of the Covenant; while the Independents looked on him as an apostate from their principles, and therefore, as a deadly enemy. There were, moreover, fanatics belonging to all classes, who made no secret of their intention to rid the earth of so great a tyrant; indeed, there was one, colonel Titus, who, under the signature of Allen, did not scruple to publish a book in justification of the proposed deed. All these matters preyed upon the mind of the Protector,—not only robbing him of peace, but seriously affecting his health. He now wore armour constantly under his clothes, and was alike uneasy in solitude and in a crowd; in the former

situation, lest advantage should be taken of his loneliness,—in the latter, lest some mortal enemy should approach him unobserved. The cares of the state, also, weighed heavily upon him; while the sickness and death of his favourite daughter, the lady Claypole, bowed him to the dust. It is said, that she upbraided him with his treason to the king, almost with her parting breath. But, however this might be, he did not recover the blow. He had long been subject to gout and inflammatory attacks, to which was added, in the month of August, a fever, which terminated in tertian ague. Under that disease he sank; for on the 3rd of September, the anniversary of his great victories of Dunbar and of Worcester, and a day which he had ever taught himself to regard as fortunate, he gave up the ghost, having with difficulty appointed his son Richard to succeed him in the office of Protector.

Thus died, in the sixtieth year of his age, one of the most extraordinary men whom England, or perhaps, any other country, has ever produced. By the efforts of his own genius, which set the restraints of principle and of prejudice alike at defiance, Oliver Cromwell raised himself at a period when there is generally supposed to be the widest scope for talent, and therefore, a more than common share of talent brought into play, from the station of a private gentleman, to be the ruler of a mighty empire. He was forty-three years of age ere he served in the field, yet he became, as it were by intuition, the ablest commander of his age; and though never listened to as a speaker in the lower house of parliament, he nevertheless contrived to mould both it and the upper house to his own purposes. In religion, Cromwell, whatever he might have been during the last years of his public life, was, at its commencement, a sincere bigot. Yet was he playful in his more private hours, almost to childishness; and in his own family, his kindness, his consideration, and warmth of

affection, are said to have been remarkable. How far his religious tenets may have undergone a change after he reached the pinnacle of his greatness, it is hard to say. On the one hand, he who could make game of the fanaticism of others, may be suspected of having got rid of his own; on the other, there are traditions preserved of his behaviour a few hours previous to his death, which would seem to prove that the spark was never wholly extinguished. "Should any fool," said he on a certain occasion, when his courtiers were groping on the floor to recover a cork-screw which he had dropped, "Should any fool put in his head at the door, he would fancy from your posture that you are seeking the Lord,—and you are only seeking a cork-screw." Yet the very man who said this, assured his physicians, while weeping over his sick-bed, that "the Lord had revealed to him that he would not die;" and, having ascertained from his chaplain, that in his judgment it was impossible for any one to fall, who had once been effectually called, he exclaimed, "Then am I safe, for I am sure that I was once in a state of grace."

Cromwell's spirit returned to Him who gave it, amid the howling of a storm, which overthrew houses, and tore up by their roots some of the largest trees in St. James's park. It would have been wonderful had either his friends or his enemies failed to interpret the sign, each party according to its own predilections, and both with equal disregard to reason and common sense.

THE COMMONWEALTH.

RICHARD CROMWELL, on whom the Protectorate now devolved, was a young man of very moderate talents, and still more moderate ambition, whose fitness to conduct even an established government might have admitted of a question, but who was confessedly

incapable of filling the chair which his father had bequeathed to him. It is true, that for a brief space his authority seemed to be acknowledged, not only without opposition, but with cheerfulness; for addresses poured in from various parts of the country, and both the parliament and the army obeyed him. But the devotion which some experienced, and more affected, soon began to cool, and cabals and intrigues were formed against him in all quarters. Richard Cromwell was neither a fanatic nor a successful warrior. His hold, therefore, upon the soldiery, was of the most precarious kind; and though nominally directed by the representatives of the people, the soldiers were now, as they had long been, the real masters of England. A conspiracy among the leading officers, of which Fleetwood, the Protector's brother-in-law, put himself at the head, compelled him to dissolve the parliament,—and his own abdication, not perhaps unwillingly ratified, followed immediately afterwards.

For a short time serious apprehensions were entertained lest Henry, his brother, then lord lieutenant of Ireland, and a young man educated in camps, and possessed both of courage and talent, might dispute the decree of these military disposers of events. Henry, however, wavered too long, and was in the end driven to an unconditional submission; while the officers, after maturely considering whether it might not be advisable to govern ostensibly, as well as in reality, by the sword, made up their minds to restore the Long Parliament. This was done accordingly, and seventy individuals, for the most part regicides and bigoted Republicans, became, with their speaker, Lenthal, the nominal sovereigns of England. But the army, which conferred these honours upon them, never intended that they should carry with them substantial power; and hence, when the parliament, in electing an executive, appeared carefully to exclude all influential military officers from

the body, the deadliest offence was given, and the most inveterate hostility excited. Nor was it among the troops alone that a spirit of restless and even of contemptuous dissatisfaction arose. The bigots who composed this Rump parliament, disgusted equally the Presbyterians and the Royalists; and both Presbyterians and Royalists entered into plots for the restoration of order, even should it be necessary, in so doing, to reinstate the king upon his throne. As might have been expected, Charles eagerly lent himself to these movements. But his counsels, as well as those of his adherents, were betrayed, and an insurrection, which, in Cheshire, bore at one time a promising appearance, was suppressed without difficulty, and its leaders either taken or slain.

The parliament stood not more in dread of Charles and his avowed partisans, than of their own troops; yet had they been compelled to employ general Lambert, with a division of the army, to restore order in Cheshire. They were soon taught that men who carry arms possess the power, if they be willing, to give rather than receive the law. Lambert not only treated with neglect a speaker's order for his supersession; but engaging Fleetwood and others to concur in the project, marched upon London, and dissolved the parliament. This was done with every mark of ignominy and contempt, and the supreme authority being seized by those who could alone advance a pretension to wield it, the British empire became subject, in its utmost extent, to a military government. A body called "the Committee of Safety," consisting of twenty-three members, discharged the offices both of the legislative and the executive; and the free parliament which had been promised to the people, was heard of no more.

All this while, the conditions both of Charles and of his adherents were, as far as human foresight extended, utterly desperate. Broken by frequent defeats, de-

prived by death or exile of their leaders, bowed down through the heavy exactions to which they were liable, and proscribed both at home and abroad, the Royalists appeared to have sunk into that state of absolute stupor and despondency, which is in most cases the prelude to an abandonment of principle itself. There were, indeed, among them, not a few, whose anxiety to behold the re-establishment of a fixed constitution, would have led them to swear allegiance to almost any usurper who possessed sufficient vigour to establish his throne; while of the remainder, by far the greater proportion had become mere dreamers,—who religiously drank the king's health wherever they knew that they were safe, and felt satisfied in thus giving vent to what they considered as their loyalty. With respect again to Charles himself, the failure of the Cheshire conspiracy appeared to have cut off, both from him and from others, the last hope which they seem to have encouraged of his possible reinstatement in power. His appeals, therefore, to the courts of France and Spain for aid, were treated with the greatest coldness; indeed the former power exhibited, by no unequivocal signs, that she would gladly be delivered from his presence within her territories. Yet at this very juncture, when his prospects appeared to be the most dark, a light was already springing up to cheer him; and that too in a quarter whence, from various causes, he had, perhaps, the least right to expect that any good would arise.

I mentioned, some time ago, that general Monk had been left by Oliver Cromwell in the chief command in Scotland; and that, by the vigour of his counsels, and the admirable disposition of his means, he kept that turbulent country in a state of perfect submission. Monk, the younger son of an ancient but dilapidated family in Devonshire, had entered the army in early life as a profession, and had served both in the expeditions against Cadiz and the Isle of Rhé, and in the

Low Countries. At the breaking out of the civil war, he espoused the royal cause, and performed many and meritorious services in Ireland, where the kindness of his nature, not less than his gallantry and skill, secured for him the devoted affection of his soldiers. But having been made prisoner by the Parliamentarians, when serving under Biron in Wales, he was committed to the Tower, where, throughout the extended space of two years, he suffered all the miseries of a rigorous confinement. His merits were, however, known to Cromwell, who prevailed upon him to accept a command in a force which the parliament was about to employ against the Irish rebels; and as these were alike hostile to the king and his enemies, Monk persuaded himself that, in fighting against them, he might still adhere to the principles of his early life. But in this, he had deceived himself. His regiment was recalled to England,—and by a process of reasoning, which may easily be understood, he became at last reconciled to the idea of combating the avowed supporters of monarchy itself.

It is highly probable that Monk never entirely overcame the principles of his early youth. Be that, however, as it may, he no sooner beheld Lambert, whom he cordially abhorred, in power, than he began to intrigue against him; and to speak of the propriety of substituting the rule of a parliament for that of the Committee of Safety. Of the re-establishment of the monarchy he said not one word; yet were the hopes of the Royalists everywhere excited, and even Charles himself strove, through more than one channel, to open a communication with this ancient friend of his house. Meanwhile Lambert and his coadjutors experienced the greatest alarm. They sent down commissioners to inquire into the state of the army of Scotland, and to win over, if possible, the troops from the general.

tution, which alone held out to them the prospect of permanent tranquillity. Under these circumstances the elections went everywhere, as Monk had anticipated, in favour of the royalists. Yet even in this stage of the business, the general carefully abstained from making any suggestion which might be construed into a command. He desired, indeed, to have the king recalled, and recalled without conditions,—yet he was anxious that the arrangement should spring from the unbiassed judgments of the people of England, acting through their representatives. He had not miscalculated the result. In spite of a bold attempt on the part of the regicides, to excite disaffection in the army,—an attempt which the escape of Lambert from the Tower had well nigh rendered successful,—Monk's good fortune never forsook him. The Peers returned of their own accord to their chamber, of which the doors were open to receive them. The Commons inveighed against Cromwell, and the murderers of their late sovereign; while the general, taking advantage of the disposition, caused it to be announced to them, that a servant of his majesty was, even then, at the door, with a letter from the king to his Commons. The effect was electrical. He was desired to enter; the letter, which contained the promise of a general amnesty, was eagerly read, and there arose a cry, which was immediately taken up in all parts of the house, "God save king Charles the Second."

From that moment the fate of Britain was determined. The people gladly followed the example set them by the senate; and Charles was brought back amid such general rejoicing that, to use the words of lord Clarendon, "a man could not but wonder, where those persons dwelt, who had done all the mischief, and kept the king, for so many years, from enjoying the comfort and support of such excellent subjects." On the 29th of May, being his birth-day, Charles the Second

entered London in triumph, accompanied by Monk, who had hastened to Dover to welcome him, and who obtained, as he deserved, the highest marks of his master's favour and gratitude.

It has been remarked by our great historian, Hume, that "no people could undergo a change more sudden and entire in their manners, than did the English nation during this period." The reader of the preceding pages will have discovered that Hume's observation is but partially just, that the change, though undoubtedly complete, was not sudden,—that it was the growth of years, and in some respects, the inevitable result of circumstances. In no other country of Europe were men so powerfully affected by the two most important events in history,—the Reformation and the invention of printing. The one, indeed, told upon the other in a degree to which we cannot find a parallel elsewhere, nor can it be doubted that both contributed, though by means totally distinct, to produce that change in the national manners, which I have endeavoured to describe. When the right of private judgment comes to be suddenly exercised by persons who, during their previous lives, never ventured to think for themselves at all, it is impossible to conceive that it should not lead them into error,—while a free access to books can only bewilder and confuse, provided the mind be destitute of that previous culture which alone enables it to digest what is read, and to gather knowledge from the recorded experience of others. To these two causes, indeed, working slowly, but with irresistible effect, throughout half a century, may be traced the excesses and absurdities of that stormy period, when he whose fanaticism took the most repulsive form, became the chief favourite, and the worst passions, under the mask of religion, were freely indulged. Hence also the fierce and implacable animosities, which hindered the partisans of the rival factions from holding the

slightest intercourse one with the other; and drove them, even in the deportment of their every-day lives, to affect the most decided and most ridiculous contrarieties.

In exact proportion as the Puritans denounced even innocent amusements, the Royalists carried an opposite system to extremes. They became dissolute and debauched, in spite of the good example set them by Charles the First; and took pleasure in excesses, because they appeared to widen thereby the line of demarcation between them and their enemies. The Roundheads, on the other hand, affected an absolute abhorrence of all sports and recreations. Horse-races, morrice-dances, with other sports to which the common people were attached, they reprobated as heathenish customs, and put them down, both in London and in the country, by force of arms. Meanwhile they profaned churches, and plundered the clergy without scruple. In several cathedrals the rings still remain in the walls, to which Cromwell's troops tied their horses; and the absence of the brass, and the more precious metals, from the tombs of deceased abbots and bishops, point out where the rapacity of these hypocritical plunderers exercised itself.

The era of the Republic is distinguished for the rise of Quakerism, of which George Fox, the son of a Lancashire weaver, was the founder. The name was given to the sect in consequence of the convulsions and distortions with which they were accustomed to interperse their devotional exercises; though they themselves assumed the appellation, which they still retain, of the Society of Friends. Next to the founder, the most distinguished man among them was James Naylor, who was guilty of the wildest extravagances, and suffered the severest persecutions. Naylor carried his frenzy so far as to give out that he was Jesus the Saviour of the world; and after having been pilloried,

whipped, burned in the face, and otherwise maltreated, was cured at last by solitary confinement in Bridewell, where he was fed upon bread and water.

From the era of the Great Civil War we date the existence of a standing army in England. The same period added greatly to the population and consequent importance of the colonies in North America, as well as to that addiction to commercial pursuits, for which the English are remarkable, and which renders trade in this country more respected and followed, than in any other nation of Europe. We find also, that many eminent men lived and wrote in this season of trouble. Of Milton, Clarendon, Jeremy Taylor, and Hammond, I have already made mention. To these may be added, the names of Usher the chronologist, of Waller and Cowley the poets, of Inigo Jones the great architect, of Selden, Chillingworth, Harrington, Davenant, and Hobbes, the last, one of those wrong-minded men, who love to oppose themselves to the opinions of the world, and exhibit, by their own conduct, that they have not learned to credit themselves. Harvey, from whose discovery of the circulation of the blood so much good has resulted, enjoyed the favour of Charles the First, and was not absolutely discountenanced even by the Republicans.

In the arts of painting and music the English had as yet made little progress; Charles, indeed, by patronizing Vandyke, and giving encouragement to Lawes, strove to introduce a better taste. But it is scarcely necessary to add, that the Puritans considered the practice of these arts as a distortion of the faculties which God had given, and denounced it as impious.

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CHAPTER VIII.

CHARLES THE SECOND.—HIS POPULARITY.—HIS EXTRAVAGANCE.—FALLS INTO DISFAVOUR WITH THE PARLIAMENT.—WILLIAM PRINCE OF ORANGE.—CHARLES'S SUBSERVIENCY TO FRANCE.—CONTESTS WITH THE PARLIAMENT ABOUT THE SUCCESSION.—TITUS OATES.—SCOTTISH AFFAIRS.—CHARLES GOVERNS WITHOUT A PARLIAMENT.—THE RYE-HOUSE PLOT.—JAMES DUKE OF YORK.—THE KING'S ILLNESS AND DEATH.

[A. D. 1660 to A. D. 1685.]

THE reign of Charles the Second opened under circumstances as propitious as it is possible for the human imagination to conceive. Disgusted with the hypocrisy, and weary of the misrule, to which, since the commencement of the troubles, they had been subject, even the most ardent lovers of liberty began to apprehend that it was not to be secured, except under the forms of the old constitution. With respect, again, to the people at large, who took of these matters a more just, because a more practical view, they remembered only the quiet which they had enjoyed while a king occupied the throne; and they hailed the Restoration as a sure prelude of a return to the same order of things which had prevailed so happily in their own early youth, and of which their fathers had told them. It is not surprising, then, that the reception which awaited Charles should have been of the most enthusiastic kind, or that men should have appeared willing to exalt in his person, to the highest pitch, that authority, of which the exercise had cost his father both his throne and his life.

If the feelings of the subjects ran in this channel, it is but just towards the monarch to state, that never was a prince better calculated to turn popular pre-



Great Seal of the Commonwealth.

judice to a good account. Endowed by nature with a manly person; possessed of a peculiarly attractive and gracious manner; easy, affable, gay, good-humoured,—he won the hearts of all classes, by the total absence of stateliness with which he received their congratulations, and the seeming cordiality with which he entered into their extravagant delight. Nor were Charles's good qualities confined to his outward deportment alone. Constitutionally indolent, he was also constitutionally humane, and like all men addicted to pleasure, considered power as a thing to be desired only because it would enable him to indulge his own humours unquestioned. While yet in exile at Breda, he had issued a proclamation, in which his subjects were assured of a general pardon of past offences, and the enjoyment of the most absolute freedom of conscience; and though he had qualified both promises by a reference to the will of the parliament, he did not hesitate, so soon as he ascended the throne, to carry them liberally into effect. Six only of those who had signed the warrant for the late king's death, with four of the principal agents in conducting the trial, were brought to the scaffold. It is to be regretted that the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw, should have been taken from their graves, and subjected to insults which could bring disgrace only on those by whom they were inflicted.

When Charles took into his own hands the reins of government, he found the spirit of party very violent throughout the nation. Between Churchmen and Presbyterians in particular, the bitterest jealousy prevailed; and as the Convention (for so the legislative body was called, by whose suffrages the Restoration took place), contained a much larger proportion of the latter than of the former body, Charles considered it prudent to deal with both as if they were alike acceptable to himself. Monk, a Presbyterian, whose services had

indeed merited the greatest reward, was created duke of Albemarle; and several other laymen of the same persuasion were advanced to the Peerage. In the same spirit, Calamy and Baxter, two eminent Presbyterian divines, were appointed king's chaplains. These acts on the part of the sovereign, were peculiarly pleasing to the legislature, which proceeded to evince its satisfaction by restoring to such benefices as chanced to be vacant, the survivors of the ejected bishops and clergy. Still, care was taken that to the Church no decided superiority should be given; while, in settling the revenue, which was done on a very liberal scale, the utmost attention was paid to the people's liberties. All the enactments which had restrained the prerogative under Charles the First, were revived; and it was ordered, that not more than a quarter's revenue should be voted at one time.

Having thus set the wheels of government in motion, the Convention, on the 29th of December, dissolved itself; and writs were immediately issued for the assembling of a new parliament. So completely had the king's proceedings secured the confidence of the people, that everywhere the elections ran in favour of the court; insomuch, that out of four hundred members of the lower house, there were not fifty returned inimical to the prerogative, or unfriendly towards the church. Their first enactments, indeed, clearly showed that in all matters, save the unlimited command of the public purse, they were willing to place Charles the Second in the same situation with his ancestors. The bishops were restored by acclamation to their seats in the House of Lords. The passing of the Corporation Act rendered it imperative on magistrates to renounce the Covenant, and to receive the Communion from the hands of an established clergyman. The Act of Uniformity required from all ministers, schoolmasters, and others, an assent to the articles and canons of the

church; and not fewer than two thousand divines, having refused to conform, were deprived of their livings. Even the king's marriage with the princess Catherine of Portugal,—a Roman Catholic, and therefore an object of suspicion, was not objected to. But it was not in England only, that Charles appeared to reign in the hearts, as well as over the persons of his subjects. Ireland, ground to the dust by Cromwell, was grateful for such relaxations as Charles admitted, and continued, under the duke of Ormond, tranquil and peaceable; while Scotland, relieved from the forts and garrisons which had hitherto bridled her, submitted, under her native parliament, to the re-establishment of Episcopacy. Thus, in all parts of his dominions, Charles had the satisfaction to see that order prevailed; and if from time to time the murmurs of a neglected Cavalier broke in upon his pleasures, he endeavoured to stifle them, by reflecting, that a king of England cannot be the sovereign of a party; and that in all states of society there must be partial evil, which neither human laws nor human sympathy can reach.

Had Charles united to his own happy temper and captivating address, even a portion of his father's integrity and firmness of purpose, his reign would have doubtless been one of the most fortunate, as well as glorious in our annals. As it is, there is no period in the history of England, on which the patriot looks back with a sense of such burning shame and humiliation. Unstable, selfish,—incapable of any solid attachments,—careless of the honour of his country, and even of his own, Charles soon began to give proof that his highest ambition extended no further than to secure for himself and those immediately about him, ample means of the most impure and unworthy gratifications. His amiable and gentle consort was neglected; while his time was chiefly spent in the company of abandoned women, some of whom were even en-

nobled, and pressed upon the injured queen as maids of honour. His male companions, too, were men of wit, doubtless, but destitute alike of religion and that sense of propriety which is sometimes, though very inadequately, made to supply its place. In such a court, the presence of Clarendon could not but be felt as a restraint; for Clarendon was too sincerely attached to his master's honour, not to reprove even royal vices. But Charles, if he hated the reproofs, entertained a high respect both for the wisdom and integrity of the reprover; while the marriage of James duke of York to the chancellor's daughter, caused even the minions of the king's pleasures to exercise caution in their intrigues to subvert his influence.

The extravagance of Charles, and the rapacity of his mistresses, soon exhausted both the funds which the parliament had granted, and the ample marriage-portion, three hundred thousand pounds, which the princess Catherine had brought. How to obtain a supply, was now the only topic discussed in court; nor for a time could any one suggest an expedient which appeared likely to serve the king's purpose. It will be borne in mind, that ever since the time of Oliver Cromwell's protectorate, the English had been in possession of Dunkirk, a station which the people valued chiefly because it secured to them an equivalent for Calais. Charles knew that both France and Spain greatly coveted the town, and as his personal predilections led him to oblige the former in preference to the latter, he determined to open a negotiation for its sale, with Louis the Fourteenth. It may be some extenuation of a deed so discreditable, that the parliament refused to vote funds for keeping Dunkirk in a state of defence; and that, except as a point from which to carry on an aggressive war against France, it was of no real value. Nevertheless, the student of history blushes when he reads that a king of England bartered away, for the

sum of four hundred thousand pounds, the only continental possession of which the country could then boast. A mighty clamour was raised, so soon as this transaction became known; which another act of royal authority, different in kind, indeed, but equally unwise, served not to allay.

In proportion as affairs settled down into something like habitual order, men began to look back upon the false lights which had misled them, with horror, and to account all who were not friendly to the established constitution, in church and in state, as enemies to good government, and of course to public tranquillity. Puritans, Fifth-monarchy-men, and even Presbyterians themselves, became, equally with Papists, odious in the sight of the people; and hence, severe laws were enacted with the view of rooting out, if possible, Nonconformity, under whatever guise it might show itself. The king, and the duke of York, whose leaning towards Popery began early to be suspected, expressed a strong disapprobation of these measures. They were not, indeed, sorry to throw the odium of intolerant legislation upon the parliament, because it formed a part, and not a trifling part, of their great design to render the nation disgusted with parliaments. But they themselves took every opportunity of declaiming against this grievous oppression of men's consciences; and of screening, as far as their influence went, the recusants from punishment. Among other measures, Charles pretended to regard the laws against Nonconformity, as incompatible with a due regard to the compact into which he had originally entered with his people. In spite, therefore, of the remonstrances of Clarendon, he issued a proclamation, of which even the Protestant Dissenters could not mistake the object. Under the pretext of establishing that liberty of conscience of which he had assured his subjects from Breda, he suspended, by virtue of the

prerogative, the decrees of the legislature; and permitted to the Papists the right of publicly celebrating their worship in all parts of the kingdom. In a moment, the Presbyterians, whom he hoped to win over, joined the Churchmen, and Charles was compelled, by a strong demonstration of public feeling, to revoke his ill-judged edict.

There had prevailed for some time between the people of England and of Holland a feeling of mutual dislike,—the necessary result of a rivalry in commercial pursuits, as well as in naval renown. To the court of England the Hollanders were equally obnoxious, though for a different reason; they were abhorred on account of their bigoted Protestantism. Charles, hoping to obtain from the antipathies of his parliament, those supplies which they refused to award from a principle of loyalty, forced a war upon the Dutch. He did so, in defiance of the protestations of the chancellor, under the idea that France and Denmark would gladly join him; and he found himself almost immediately opposed, single-handed, to the fleets of these three powers. France and Denmark espoused the cause of the Dutch. Nevertheless, the English fought with their accustomed valour, and in several great naval actions, either achieved the victory, or came off without disgrace. On the 30th of June, 1665, one hundred and fourteen English ships, commanded by the duke of York and prince Rupert, engaged an equal number of Dutch vessels, under Obdam and Tromp, and defeated them with great slaughter, Obdam himself perishing with all his crew. On the 1st of June in the year following, after the French had joined the Dutch, another battle took place, which lasted four whole days, and ended in the repulse of the English. But this disgrace, if such it may be termed, was effectually wiped out, by the splendid victory of the 28th of July, in which De Ruyter, with eighty sail, was forced to take shelter in

his own ports, from the valour of prince Rupert and the duke of Albemarle, the leaders of an equal force. Thus, during some years, was a fierce contest carried on, which served no other purpose than to exhaust the treasure, and expend the best blood, of two warlike and enterprising nations.

During the continuance of this war, two events befell, of which it would be improper to omit making some mention. My readers need scarcely be told, that London in the seventeenth century was a very different city from London in the nineteenth; that the streets were narrow and ill-ventilated; the houses close and gloomy; and the more obscure lanes and alleys crowded with a population among whom habits of ordinary cleanliness were unknown. It had repeatedly been visited by grievous diseases, which, when once established in so favourable a position, did not fail to produce terrible havoc. In the depth of the winter of 1664—5, there had appeared, in the outskirts of the metropolis, two or three isolated cases of a complaint, to which, from the symptoms that accompanied it, the faculty gave the name of Plague. Great alarm was naturally excited, and public attention painfully directed itself to the weekly variations in the bills of mortality. On the one hand, the cool temperature of the air, and the frequent changes in the weather, were hailed as favourable circumstances. On the other, it could not be denied, that, from whatever cause arising, the number of deaths was progressively on the increase. In this state of suspense, alternately agitated by their hopes and their fears, men looked to the result with intense anxiety; till, at length, towards the end of May, under the influence of a warmer sun, and with the aid of a close and stagnant atmosphere, the evil burst forth in all its terrors. From the centre of St. Giles's, the infection spread rapidly over the adjacent parishes,—threatened the court at Whitehall, and stole

its way into the city. A general panic ensued. The nobility and gentry fled from the devoted place; the royal family followed; and then, all who valued their personal safety more than considerations of home and profit, made ready to imitate the example. From every outlet, the tide of emigration flowed into the country, till it was checked at last by the lord mayor's refusal to sign bills of health, and by the opposition of the neighbouring townships, which rose in their own defence, and formed a barrier around the devoted city.

In this, as in every other like visitation, the liberality of the rich was eminently displayed. The king subscribed a thousand pounds; the archbishop of Canterbury five hundred; the corporation of London six hundred; and other eminent individuals in proportion; but neither the donations of some, nor the more noble, because more perilous, self-devotion of others, sufficed to stay the progress of that dire visitation. It was to no purpose that the city was divided into wards, each having its allotted complement of watchers, nurses, and searchers. The red cross painted on a thousand doors, with the legend, "Lord have mercy on us," placed above, gave notice that pestilence reigned within; while the dead became so numerous, that it was deemed both inexpedient and hazardous to expose them, even for a moment, to public gaze. Those who expired in the streets were immediately removed and cast into pits. For those who died in their dwellings, the tinkling of a bell, accompanied with the glare of links, announced, night after night, that the death-cart was approaching. No coffins were prepared; no funeral service was read; no mourners were permitted to follow the remains of their relatives or friends. The cart proceeded to the nearest cemetery, and shot its burden into the common grave, a deep and spacious trench, capable of holding some scores of bodies, and dug, either in the church-yard, or in the outskirts of

the parish. Of the terrible disease which thus made a wilderness of the capital of England, the following description has come down to us.

"The disease generally manifested itself by the usual febrile symptoms of shivering, nausea, head-ach, and delirium. In some, these affections were so mild as to be mistaken for a slight and transient indisposition. The victim saw not, or would not see, the insidious approach of his foe; he applied to his usual avocations till a sudden faintness came on, and the maculæ, the fatal 'tokens,' appeared on his breast, and within an hour life was extinct. But in most cases the pain and the delirium left no room for doubt. On the third or fourth day, buboes or carbuncles arose; if these could be made to suppurate, recovery might be anticipated; if they resisted the efforts of nature and the skill of the physician, death was inevitable. The sufferings of the patients often threw them into paroxysms of phrensy. They burst the bands by which they were confined to their beds; they precipitated themselves from the windows; they ran naked into the street, and plunged into the river."

Such was the great plague which, during some months, raged in London, cutting off its inhabitants by thousands every week. In the country, too, more especially at Colchester, Norwich, Winchester, Cambridge, and Salisbury, its ravages were fearful. Of the number of its victims there and elsewhere, no accurate account has been preserved; but as they amounted, in London alone, to one hundred and thirty or forty thousand, we shall probably not over-estimate the number of deaths, if we take them at little less than a quarter of a million.

The plague ceased in February, 1666, and men had returned to their former habits,—the industrious and the frugal to their shops and warehouses,—the profligate to their haunts of vice and folly, when another

calamity overtook the metropolis, scarcely, at the moment, less alarming, though eventually the cause of great and lasting improvements. During the prevalence of a gale, of which the violence drove both the English and Dutch fleets into harbour, there suddenly burst out, in a baker's shop in Pudding-lane, near Fish-street, a fire, which, communicating with the wooden store-house hard by, soon spread over the neighbourhood. Every effort to arrest its progress proved vain; for the engine, which raised water from the Thames, was consumed in the beginning, and the pipes from the New River were found to be dry. Driven onwards by the wind, the flames gradually embraced the whole of the interval between the Tower and the Temple. Thirteen thousand two hundred houses, with eighty-nine churches, including St. Paul's, were reduced to ashes; and a space of three hundred and seventy-three acres within, with sixty-three without, the city walls, presented one mass of smoking ruins. Both Charles and his brother exerted themselves nobly to arrest the destruction; which, by throwing down whole rows of dwellings, and so cutting off the communication between the fire and its aliment, was at length stayed. The people, however, who had scarcely recovered from the impressions made upon them by the plague, were too much the slaves of superstition and of prejudice, to attribute this second visitation to accident. The fire was openly stated to be the work of incendiaries; and the Papists, being, for various causes, the most obnoxious portion of the community, bore the blame.

Charles, who possessed no passion for military glory, and had engaged in hostilities with the Dutch, partly with a view to please his people, partly in the hope of being able to divert a portion of their grants to his own selfish purposes, was by this time grown heartily tired of the war. The commons watched him closely; and the subsidies which they voted proved

so inadequate, that he gladly took advantage of a cartel, to make the Hollanders aware that they might obtain peace upon very moderate terms. The Dutch, aware that they could gain nothing by the contest, gladly consented to negotiate; and plenipotentiaries met at Paris, with a determination, on both sides, not to permit questions of mere form to interfere with their arrangements. While the treaty was yet in progress, the king foolishly consented to dismantle his fleets and dismiss his soldiers. He had scarcely done so, when the Dutch admiral, De Witt, put to sea, at the head of a formidable squadron; and meeting with no force capable of resisting him, dashed at the Medway, and committed, both there and in the Thames, great havoc. The naval arsenal at Sheerness was sacked; several ships, which lay at anchor in the river, were burned; and the flag of England was insulted almost in the port of London. Great indeed was the clamour throughout the country when these disasters became known; while the king made haste to enrol an army of twelve thousand men, with the avowed intention of taking revenge on so perfidious a people. But the parliament, which regarded all levies of land-forces as directed rather against the liberty of the subject at home, than against a foreign enemy, refused to contribute to their maintenance; and the troops being disbanded, the negotiation went on as if no such expedition as that of De Witt had taken place. Peace was concluded on terms which the English considered unfavourable, though it left them in possession of the valuable colony of New York, which they had won by the sword in the commencement of the struggle.

The nation was greatly dissatisfied with the treaty; and as has always happened when the English people choose to be out of humour, some victim was demanded on whom to vent their spleen. Of the lessening influence of Clarendon over the king's councils, I have

already spoken; it may be necessary to add, that the chancellor was not, and never had been, a favourite with the people. The Non-conformists hated him on account of his high-church principles; the Papists abhorred him because of his hostility to their creed; the cavaliers considered him as the cause of the neglect with which they were treated; and the courtiers disliked him because of his superior talents, and somewhat overbearing manner. Clarendon was, of all the attendants about the king's person, the man best qualified to play the part of scape-goat. It is true that he had ever served his master faithfully; that he had even opposed his wishes, and thwarted some of his designs, because he foresaw that their accomplishment would prove fatal; but Charles was not the man to experience gratitude under any circumstances, and least of all under such circumstances as these. The commons brought in a bill of attainder against the chancellor. It was carried, without difficulty, through their own house, but resisted in the peers; not through any personal predilection for the accused, but on the ground of the unconstitutional vagueness and generality of the charges. The result, however, was, that Clarendon, finding the stream set in against him, withdrew to France, where, after spending his last days in seclusion, which he amused by drawing up his *History of the Civil Wars*, he died, without having received so much as a kind message from the prince whose family he had served so long and so faithfully.

If Clarendon had erred at all in the advice which he gave the king, it was in his predilection for a French alliance that he went astray. More jealous of domestic than of foreign control, he had encouraged Charles to look to Louis for support against his own parliament; and the consequence was, that England had been brought to play a part in the game of European politics very secondary to her ancient and inveterate rival.

The removal of the chancellor seemed in this respect to infuse new vigour into the king's councils. Prince Rupert, the duke of Ormond, Mr. Secretary Trevor, and the lord keeper Bridgman, became for a while his chief advisers; and these being men of honour, as well as persons of judgment and good sense, the attitude which England assumed among the nations, was such as became her. It may be necessary to state, that Louis the Fourteenth, by his marriage with the princess of Castile, became the next but one in the succession to the Spanish throne,—and that, though he originally pledged himself never to unite the two monarchies, he began by degrees to treat that engagement as something which it would be impossible to maintain. Nor did his ambition permit him to stop here. There was an old custom in Brabant, which gave to the female, by a first marriage, a claim of inheritance, where private property was at stake, preferable to that of a male by a second marriage. Louis gladly took advantage of this circumstance, and pretending that his queen had acquired a right to that important province, invaded the Netherlands at the head of seventy thousand men, made himself master of several of its most important fortresses, and proved to the satisfaction of the whole world that the vigour of the Spanish councils, and the superiority of Spanish valour, were alike passed away. Such a state of things was not viewed with indifference by the able and upright men to whom Charles had given his confidence. They despatched sir William Temple, a worthy representative, to the Hague; and under his auspices, a triple league was formed, by which England, Holland, and Sweden, undertook to put bounds to French ambition.

So bold, yet so judicious an arrangement, secured for England the respect of foreign nations; nor were the proceedings of the new ministers marked by less of vigour or of wisdom at home. In Scotland some dis-

turbances took place, which, as they originated in the fanaticism of a few illiterate men, were very easily suppressed; while in Ireland, notwithstanding an impolitic law which forbade the importation of cattle, public tranquillity was but partially disturbed. It was, indeed, in managing the English parliament,—where the parsimony of the commons became daily more and more inconvenient, and the lords themselves were apt to forget, in the prosecution of obnoxious individuals, what was due to their own dignity not less than to the prerogatives of the governed,—that the chief difficulty was experienced. Still the tide of public affairs flowed on, upon the whole, smoothly, till the year 1670, when another change unfortunately occurred in the king's choice of his familiars. It was then, that he gave himself up to the management of five noblemen, who, from the initial letters in their names, were designated the Cabal; and who, being destitute of all principle themselves, soon led him into the most flagrant errors, of which the consequences proved fatal to the cause of which he was the representative. The noblemen in question were the lords Clifford, Ashley, afterwards earl of Shaftesbury, Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale; than whom it would be difficult to discover, in the annals of any country, a more corrupt knot of trading politicians.

The cabal being themselves pensioners on the bounty of France, paid court both to their foreign and domestic masters, by stirring up in the mind of the latter a detestation of all parliaments, and teaching him to look to the former for the supply of his pecuniary wants. The better to ensure the success of their designs, Louis employed two able emissaries; one the king's sister, now duchess of Orléans; the other a beautiful and fascinating courtesan, whom the king took into his confidence, and created duchess of Portsmouth. At the instigation of these advisers, Charles stooped so low as

spirit of Protestantism, throughout England, caught the alarm. The lord-keeper, Bridgman, having refused to affix the great seal to that document, was immediately displaced, and Shaftesbury promoted in his room.

It would be tedious to relate the course of the unjust and impolitic war, which England, acting under the guidance of French counsels, was induced to wage with Holland. Enough is done when I say, that the Dutch defended themselves nobly, though assailed by all the power of Charles by sea, and of Louis by land. Of one great crime the Hollanders were, indeed, guilty. A mob, in a moment of false excitement, rose upon the De Wits, and put both brothers to death under circumstances of extreme cruelty; but the nation, uniting under William prince of Orange, displayed a courage in adversity, and a perseverance in difficulties, of which it is impossible to speak in terms of sufficient admiration. They were aided, indeed, latterly, by the emperor of Germany, as well as by Spain; but it was chiefly to the English parliament that William looked for that assistance, which neither Germany nor Spain was in a condition to afford. To meet his parliament, however, was a step to which Charles entertained the greatest aversion. Nothing, indeed, but the total destitution of his finances could have induced him to do so; and when they did assemble, the houses were not backward in giving proof, that they came together in a mood the reverse of servile towards the sovereign. The commons opened their proceedings by demanding a revocation of the edict which afforded to all classes of recusants an absolute toleration. To this the king, after some hesitation, assented; upon which, after voting certain supplies, they passed a bill requiring all persons, as a qualification for office under the crown, to abjure in the most solemn manner the doctrine of transubstantiation. There was no mistaking the design of this enactment; it was a blow at the influence of the

duke of York. But both the king and the duke were forced to yield; and, the former securing a scanty aid in money, of which but a small portion went to the service of the war, the latter resigned his command of the fleet, and withdrew, as it were, into private life.

The readiness with which Charles receded from his declaration of indulgence, breaking with his own hands the seal which gave validity to the deed, excited both the anger and the contempt of Shaftesbury, who, conceiving that the design to advance the prerogative was from that moment abandoned, changed, in revenge, his view of public affairs, and went over to the popular party. That party, however, was not yet sufficiently powerful to influence either the foreign policy or the domestic arrangements of the government; and hence the war proceeded as it had hitherto done, with dubious success. But the marriage of the duke of York with a princess of the house of Modena, by exciting general disgust throughout the country, threw no trifling accession of authority into their proceedings. They declaimed against the procedure, denounced the French alliance, and threatened to impeach the king's ministers. In vain the king removed Shaftesbury from his councils, and transferred the seals to the keeping of sir Heneage Finch. The opposition still gained strength; and when his necessities compelled him to meet his parliament in February, 1674, the means of withstanding its approaches were wanting. With some difficulty he screened Buckingham from impeachment, and was glad to purchase an indemnity for past errors, by making a separate peace with the Dutch.

In consenting to negotiate a peace with Holland, the king had, with singular inconsistency, required that he should not be compelled to recall from the French ranks a corps of English troops, which served as volunteers under Louis. He agreed, indeed, that no recruits should be sent over, but he positively refused to with-

draw the men already under arms. His conduct, in this respect, gave much umbrage to the parliament, which put the obvious interpretation upon it, that all the king's predilections were still in favour of a French alliance. It soon, moreover, became apparent to both houses, that designs were seriously entertained of effecting, by means of that alliance, vital changes in the constitution of church and state; and, though there existed little cordiality between the Lords and the Commons, they alike determined to resist the designs of the court. In this the nation so strenuously supported them, that the king, alarmed by the reports which reached him, touching the undisguised tone of men's conversation, took the rash step of ordering, by proclamation, all taverns and coffee-houses to be shut up. But the proclamation was not obeyed; and so daring was the appearance of opposition in all quarters, that the king was fain to order its withdrawal. Thus, through his own mean subserviency to the court of France, and the folly and bigotry of his infatuated brother, the popularity which attended Charles during the first years of his reign, became changed into a feeling very little removed from positive abhorrence.

One method which the Commons adopted, of exhibiting their distrust of the king's designs, was to clamour for an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the United Provinces. They offered liberal subsidies in the event of acquiescence, and thereby placed their sovereign in what was to him the most tantalizing of all situations; for, on the one hand, there was that within his reach of which he stood sorely in need, a supply of ready money; while on the other, the friendship of Louis, with all its present and promised advantages, must be sacrificed. Charles refused to break with France; yet, willing to gratify his people, and at the same time, misled by a false estimate of his nephew's character, he hastened to effect a union between

William, prince of Orange, and the princess Mary, his brother's eldest daughter. Now, as Charles was himself childless, and James had no son, this appeared to the English people tantamount to the establishment of a Protestant ascendancy, and they received the announcement with all the demonstrations of joy which such a consideration was calculated to excite. In dealing with William, however, Charles soon found that he had to do with one at least as subtle, and far more determined than himself. The prince would enter into no affairs of business till after the marriage-ceremony had been performed, alleging that it should never be said of him, that he had betrayed his allies from motives of self-interest; while after he had secured the hand of his bride, he positively refused to come into the king's projects, though tempted by the offer of the crown of Holland, in the mean while, and a still more alluring prize in the future. On the other hand, Charles disappointed his people, with whom a Dutch alliance had been regarded as the immediate consequence of the marriage. The parliament, which had been summoned in April, was further prorogued till the third of December; Louis thereby gained time to press his conquests, and Charles received, as the reward of this act of feeble policy and bad faith, the sum of two hundred thousand pounds from Paris. Nor when driven, at last, by the voice of public opinion, to interpose as a mediator between the belligerents, was Charles either more honest or more fortunate. It is true that Louis lavished his treasures freely upon others than the king of England. Some of the leaders of what was called the popular party, were in his pay; and these failed not, as often as any symptoms of reconciliation appeared, to occasion a new breach between the king and the parliament. But the result of all was as discreditable to England, as it was perilous to the repose of Europe. The peace of Nimeguen was not concluded

till after Louis had obtained permanent possession of Franche-comté, as well as of some of the most important fortresses in Flanders.

Meanwhile the condition of Scotland had become exceedingly unsettled and perplexing. The Covenanters held frequent meetings for the purposes of worship, with arms in their hands; and the sides of the hills, or the morasses with which the country abounds, were their temples. How to deal with them, moreover, was a question which no one appeared competent to answer. They made no demand for toleration; they rejected with scorn every conciliatory advance on the part of the court; they would be content with nothing short of an absolute supremacy, which should give them power to extirpate the abominations of Prelacy from the land. Lauderdale, who was now the king's representative, determined, under such circumstances, to act with vigour. He persuaded the parliament to pass a law, which gave to the king full authority over all ecclesiastical arrangements, independently of the votes of synods and other public bodies. He enrolled a body of twenty thousand militia, which should be liable, by an order from the Privy Council, to march to any part of England or Ireland, as well as of Scotland. Statutes the most arbitrary against nonconformists were enacted, to enforce obedience to which, the houses of many gentlemen in the west, where the spirit of recusancy chiefly prevailed, were taken possession of in the king's name, and filled with troops. In his private deportment, moreover, Lauderdale displayed an arrogance which corresponded well with the tyranny of his public proceedings; while his coadjutors, archbishop Sharpe, the lords Hatton and Rothes, if they did not surpass, at all events fell not short of their chief in these particulars. The following account of their mode of dealing with a fanatic of the name of Mitchell, who, in 1668, made an attempt to assassinate the archbishop, in the high-street

of Edinburgh, will serve to illustrate the kind of justice which was then administered throughout Scotland.

Mitchell, the individual whose history I am about to relate, was an enthusiast in the cause of the Covenant, upon whose heated imagination the discourses of the preachers, particularly those which described in terms of strong commendation, the exploits of Jael, Ehud, and Mattathias, had produced a deep impression. The man of all others the most obnoxious to the Covenanters, was, at this time, archbishop Sharpe, whom it was customary to describe, even from the pulpit, as an enemy both to God and man. Mitchell determined to rid the earth of such a monster; and, regardless of his own fate, took, one day, his station in the high-street, where he knew that the archbishop's carriage must soon pass. He had not waited long ere the carriage drove up, and, to his great satisfaction, stopped. Mitchell drew a pistol, and fired, just as the bishop of Orkney had stretched out his arm, for the purpose of saluting the archbishop; and the ball, being interrupted in its passage, grievously wounded the former prelate, without doing any injury to the latter. Though the street was crowded with people, no one made a movement to arrest the assassin. Mitchell walked coolly away, and for some years, nothing further was heard of him or his intentions.

It chanced, a long while after these occurrences, that Mitchell introduced himself into the archbishop's court, where some persons were undergoing examination on a charge of recusancy. The primate's eye met that of Mitchell, and a strange suspicion crossing the archbishop's mind, that he now saw before him the perpetrator of a former outrage, he caused him to be arrested. There was not a tittle of evidence on which to ground even a charge; yet Mitchell being accused, and receiving a solemn assurance of pardon, confessed that it was he who wounded the bishop of Orkney, while aiming at the

life of the primate. He was carried before a court of justice, and required to repeat his confession; but being apprehensive that though his life might be spared, he should be subjected to some other severe and disgraceful corporal punishment, he refused to do so. There had been a rising some time previously among the Pentland hills, which captain Graham, afterwards viscount Dundee, put down without difficulty. Mitchell was questioned relative to that movement, and when he denied all knowledge of the matter, in which, indeed, it does not appear that he had been any way concerned, he was put to the torture. Bruised and battered, he was carried to the Bass, a rock in the Frith of Forth, which was then used as a state-prison, where, loaded with chains, and subjected to every species of indignity, he remained some time; till the privy-council, finding that he continued obstinate, resolved to proceed with him to greater extremities. They had each of them appended his name to Mitchell's pardon; and the deed was become public property, being deposited in the records; yet they brought him to trial, on a charge of attempted murder, and swore positively in open court, that no pardon had been pronounced. On such evidence Mitchell was found guilty, and suffered death.

But the case of Mitchell was not a solitary one. Even women were put to death for refusing to denounce the Covenant; some of them under circumstances of peculiar barbarity. Landlords, too, were required to become responsible for their tenants, that they should not attend conventicles; and when the gentlemen of the west ventured to remonstrate, eight thousand highlanders, with a body of royal guards, were turned loose upon them to live in free-quarters. It is but just towards the king to state, that he knew nothing of these atrocities, and that the utmost care was taken to keep him in ignorance. While the prisons were crowded

with captives, and whole districts depopulated by sentences of outlawry, the noblemen and gentlemen of Scotland were forbidden to quit the kingdom,—an edict, of which it was the sole object to hinder them from carrying a report of the state of their country to the foot of the throne.

Such was the state of things in both divisions of the empire,—the duke of York having avowed his conversion to Popery, and the king scarce making a secret of his,—when the public mind, already agitated by a painful apprehension of changes, was thrown into the greatest alarm, by one of the most impudent forgeries which the wit of man has ever devised. There was one Titus Oates, a man of infamous character, originally a clergyman of the Church of England, though latterly an apostate Jesuit, who employed Kirby, a chemist, and one or two persons equally obscure, to alarm the king and the court with rumours of a terrible conspiracy. At first, Oates affected a desire of concealment,—but finding how eagerly the public received a tale which tended to inculcate the abhorred Papists, he went before sir Edmundbury Godfrey, and made oath, that the Pope, and the courts of France and Spain had conferred with the Roman Catholics at home, to put the king to death; to massacre all Protestants; to fire London; and to render England a province of the Papal dominions. The very extravagance of this tale obtained for it universal credit, except with Charles and his ministers; and even they were compelled to change their tone; when, a day or two after Oates had made his deposition, the murdered body of Godfrey was found in a ditch at Primrose-hill. No language could describe the terror which so awful an event created. The corpse of Godfrey was borne through the streets, seventy clergymen going before, and a vast multitude following. Coleman, the duke of York's secretary, was arrested, and his papers seized; and a

correspondence being found between him and the confessor of Louis, in which strong hopes were expressed of the final success of Popery, what had once amounted to little more than suspicion, became conviction in all minds. Oates was rendered independent by a pension of twelve hundred pounds a year. He was declared the preserver of his country by both houses; which vied with one another in the anxiety to investigate, to the utmost, so tremendous a conspiracy.

The success of Oates soon brought other devisers of plots into the field. Bedloe, a miscreant, if possible, still more depraved, went beyond the original informer; telling of armaments and projected invasions, without end; and he, too, received his reward, though not to the same amount as his predecessor. On the evidence of these men, and of others of the same stamp, Coleman, a priest called Ireland, and many innocent persons besides, suffered death; for the very courts of justice were infected with the madness of the hour; and to be accused by one of the informers, was tantamount to a sentence of condemnation. The age, indeed, seemed to be one of baseness and treachery among all ranks. Montague, the king's ambassador, suddenly returned, without leave, from Paris, and laid before the House of Commons, a letter written by the treasurer Danby, and superscribed by Charles himself, in which the terms of England's neutrality were fixed, and proof of the venality of the king and his counsellors afforded. Immediately, articles of impeachment were exhibited against Danby; while a bill was hastily passed, which rendered Papists ineligible to a seat in either house. The lords refusing to entertain the charge against Danby, and throwing out the bill of exclusion, a collision between the houses occurred, the effects of which Charles strove to avert, by dissolving a parliament which had continued in existence not less than eighteen years.

The eyes of the country were at this time anxiously

turned towards the duke of Monmouth, a natural son of Charles, by Lucy Walters, and a young man of slender capacity, indeed, but of great personal beauty, attractive manners, and strong Protestant opinions. Shaftesbury, now a leader of the popular party, had even flattered the young man with hopes of succeeding to the throne; and as the youth himself believed, or pretended to believe, that a private marriage had passed between his parents, he lent to the suggestions of that restless intriguer, a willing ear. The duke of York, as was natural, entertained a strong jealousy of Monmouth, and when the state of the elections demonstrated that the new parliament was not likely to prove more tractable than its predecessor, he refused to go abroad when requested to do so by his brother, till he had obtained a final declaration of his rival's illegitimacy. This done, he retired into the Low Countries. But, if Charles expected that the removal of his brother from their sight would render the Commons less violent or less vindictive, he had deceived himself. The house no sooner met, than it entered into a dispute with the crown respecting the appointment of a speaker. That being compromised, and a change of ministry brought about, the Habeas Corpus Act was passed; after which, a bill was brought in to exclude the duke of York from the succession, and to render him an exile from his native country. It was to no purpose that Charles placed at the head of affairs sir William Temple, the earls of Essex and Sunderland, and viscount Halifax, or strove to avert the storm by consenting to a long list of limitations on the prerogative, in the event of the crown being assumed by an avowed Papist. Popular as these ministers were, they found it impossible to guide the Commons, who carried the Exclusion Bill by a majority of one hundred and seventy-five, and sent it up to the House of Lords. In a like spirit, the prosecution of Danby was resumed, in defiance of the king's

pardon previously granted; nay, to such an extent was the arrogance of the Commons carried, that they insisted on the exclusion of the bishops from the House of Lords, whenever the investigation should come on. Once more was the king driven to the necessity of dissolving a body, which evinced a fixed determination to carry its own measures, over the necks, if I may so speak, of both the other branches of the legislature.

The display of so much obstinacy on the part of the English House of Commons, did not fail of giving encouragement to the Covenanters of Scotland. They still, indeed, abstained from positive rebellion, till an event occurred, which, bringing down upon them an accession of severities, drove them, in sheer despair, to take up arms. Archbishop Sharpe, while travelling under a slender escort, was attacked by a body of fanatics, and murdered in his daughter's arms. The whole body of Covenanters were treated by Lauderdale as if they had been parties to the crime; and the unhappy men, obeying the first law of nature, endeavoured to repel force by force. A conventicle was attacked at Rutherglen, near Glasgow, by captain Graham. The king's troops were repulsed, and the insurgents, elated with their victory, marched upon the city, of which they took possession. Multitudes now flocked to their standard, and, as the duke of Monmouth, whom Charles sent down as soon as intelligence of the rebellion reached him, was known to be in march against them, they retired, to the number of eight thousand men, and took up a position in rear of the Clyde, near Bothwell Castle. They were attacked there by Monmouth, and defeated with great loss. But Monmouth, naturally humane, and willing to increase his own popularity both in England and Scotland, used his victory with great moderation. Only two preachers of sedition were executed; while all who would give a pledge to

live peaceably, and obey the laws, were permitted to return unmolested to their homes.

Meanwhile, the king's necessities drove him to call a new parliament; and, as people were beginning to grow weary of Popish plots, and a violent illness with which he had been seized, had awakened men's feelings in the king's favour, sanguine hopes were entertained that the next session would prove much less stormy than those which went before. Again was the court disappointed. Another bill of exclusion was brought forward. The memory of Oates's tale was revived, and several Popish lords, among whom was the aged and excellent lord Stafford, were put to death; while violent resolutions were passed, condemnatory of the prerogative, in branches which were justly believed to comprehend the existence of the monarchy itself. Charles cut short these wild proceedings, by a dissolution; yet, having already formed his own plans, and being desirous of putting all parliaments decidedly in the wrong, he summoned another to meet him at Oxford. It came, but in a temper still more unsatisfactory than the last. The Commons, indeed, went so far as to corrupt the stream of justice, by endeavouring to screen from punishment one Fitzharris, a twofold traitor and libeller; upon which the king, having fully ascertained that the two houses were at issue, suddenly commanded their attendance, and dissolved the parliament. Never had a bolder step been taken by any king of England; but it succeeded. The people were already more than half won over to the side of the court, and the display of so much energy, while it intimidated the refractory, gave fresh assurance to such as preferred a monarchy to a democracy.

From that moment, Charles appeared to have changed both his personal character and his political views. He no longer sought to conciliate; but bringing into play all the authority of the crown, he strove to govern

by the exercise of a more than common energy. All the spies and informers, too, who had previously served the parliament, turned round upon their original employers, and swore their lives away. Many bad men doubtless suffered; but it is equally certain that many innocent persons were put to death on no better evidence, than had cost the lives of Coleman and the venerable lord Stafford. In Scotland, likewise, whither James had removed, the laws were administered with excessive rigour. The earl of Argyle, though a loyal and brave man, was executed to gratify the malice of his enemies; and the cottage, equally with the castle, beheld its inmates dragged forth to suffer the most barbarous punishments. Now, though James can scarcely be said to have authorised proceedings which emanated from Lauderdale and the privy-council, it is impossible to acquit him of all blame; for his influence was unbounded both in Edinburgh and in London, and he certainly never exercised it to restrain these atrocities.

The king felt his strength, and resolved to use it in such a way as should place the country for ever at his feet. He began with an attack upon the city of London, which he first of all compelled to elect sheriffs at his nomination, and then deprived of its charter. The charter was indeed restored, but only on conditions which rendered it useless as a safeguard of public liberty; while the other corporations throughout the kingdom made haste to anticipate the working of a royal commission, by making a surrender of rights which they found themselves too weak to maintain. The popular party was, indeed, everywhere prostrate; while two plots were discovered, to effect by violence some change in the order of affairs, concerning the exact motive of which it may be doubted whether the very intriguers were themselves determined. One of these, called the Rye-house Plot,—so named from a farm

on the road to Newmarket, of which Rumbald, a maltster, and himself one of the conspirators, was in the occupation, had for its immediate object the murder of the king; while the other, in which Shaftesbury, the duke of Monmouth, lord William Russell, and Algernon Sydney were chief actors, aimed at a total revolution in the government. It does not appear that the devisers of the latter project were at all privy to the objects of the former, though two men, Ferguson and Rumsey, attended the meetings of both cabals. But though the one aimed directly at the king's life, while the other proposed only to surprise his guards, and raise the city and the Covenanters, they were, when betrayed by their confederates, Keeley and Rumsey, equally liable, in the eye of the law, to the punishment of treason. Shaftesbury and Monmouth escaped beyond seas. Russell and Sydney were tried and found guilty, on evidence, at least in the case of the latter, both weak and irregular; and they died as they had lived, the former something more than an enthusiast in the cause of liberty, the latter a professed Republican, though an admitted pensioner of the French king, and a tool in his hands.

The detection of these conspiracies had the natural effect of strengthening the king's hands, and enabling him, without hazard, to take vengeance on several Scottish gentlemen, between whom and the conspirators a confidential correspondence had passed. Baillie of Jarviswood, a man of merit and learning, though a bigot in the cause of the covenant, suffered death; and nine others of less note underwent a like penalty; nay, so complete was the revulsion in public feeling, both in England and Scotland, that even Titus Oates, once so great a favourite, was condemned to pay a fine of one hundred thousand pounds, for calling the duke of York a Popish traitor. But Charles, while he thus punished others, lent a willing ear to lord Halifax, who became a mediator between him and the repentant Monmouth;

and Monmouth, after having made his submission in terms which almost deserve to be called abject, was received again into favour. He had scarcely gained his end, when he retracted that declaration. He was immediately sent into banishment, and all countenance was withdrawn from him.

Charles was now at the height of his power, which he used with too much deference to his besotted brother, restoring him, in defiance of an act of parliament, to the command of the fleet, without exacting from him the test which the law required. Except in this particular, however, he soon began to display a desire to reinstate himself in the good opinion of his people, and to attend more than he had previously done to his country's honour. James's second daughter, the lady Anne, he gave in marriage to prince George of Denmark, a young man of an amiable disposition, and, which was of much more importance, a Protestant. Even of calling a parliament he had begun to make some mention, as well as of forming a new administration, when he was suddenly smitten with a fit of apoplexy, from which he never recovered. After lingering a few days in a state of insensibility, he expired on the 6th of February, 1685, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of his reign.

It is unnecessary to draw an elaborate character of a prince whose actions, both in public and in private, speak for themselves. Of the design of Charles to reintroduce Popery and slavery into the kingdom doubts may be entertained; but the proofs are irrefragable, that as during his lifetime he gave no sign of attachment to the constitution in church and state, so at his death he avowed himself a Roman Catholic. It is very possible that he might have governed less obnoxiously had the Commons proved more liberal and more confiding; but we have no right to suppose that even in this case he would have ever governed well.

Charles was totally destitute of principle and honour as a man; and he who in private life is wanting in these respects, cannot act except selfishly as a ruler.



Great Seal of Charles the Second

CHAPTER IX.

JAMES THE SECOND.—HIS BIGOTRY AND TYRANNY.—IN-
VADES THE RIGHTS OF HIS SUBJECTS.—TRIAL OF THE
SEVEN BISHOPS.—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE LANDS IN
ENGLAND.—JAMES FLEES.—THE CROWN SETTLED ON
WILLIAM AND MARY.

[A. D. 1685, to A. D. 1688.]

JEALOUS as the nation had shown itself of James, while yet in the line of succession, the events which characterized the commencement of his reign were altogether such as to assure him of the loyalty of his subjects, and of their willingness to place reliance in his promise that he would support the authority of the laws, and maintain inviolate the constitution both in church and state. Addresses, couched in terms of abject adulation, poured in from all quarters. A proclamation by which certain duties were continued, which, as they had been granted to the late king only for life, so they ceased, on his demise, to be available, was obeyed; and even his ill-judged ostentation of reverence for the ceremonies of the Popish ritual, though it excited some pain, appears to have roused little anger. A like spirit animated the parliament which James felt himself bound to summon. The Commons settled upon him for life an annual revenue of six hundred thousand pounds; the lords were still more complying in the attacks which they made upon the remains of the Popish plot. Titus Oates, having been convicted of perjury, was whipped, fined, pilloried, and imprisoned; while the lords whom his evidence had consigned to the Tower, were set at liberty, and their honours restored. There seemed, indeed, to be everywhere a spirit of confidence, which as yet, no act on the king's part had tended to shake, when intelligence arrived that the duke of Mon-

mouth had landed in the west, and that multitudes were flocking to his standard. That unfortunate nobleman had, it will be remembered, withdrawn in disgrace to Holland, where he soon became a tool in the hands of his wily cousin; and he was now, partly by the management of the prince of Orange, and partly through the impatience of a few Scottish Covenanters, hurried into an enterprise which could not end otherwise than in his ruin.

Monmouth brought with him a slender escort of one hundred men; the adhesion of the common people soon swelled his numbers to six thousand. No persons of rank, however, joined him, and ere a blow was struck, the confidence of the leader had departed more completely than the devotion of his men. He had, indeed, taken a desperate leap in the dark; for he proclaimed his own legitimacy; denounced James as an usurper; and declared himself king; while his first proceedings gave proof that, however personally brave, he possessed no portion of the moral courage which so delicate a situation required. One affair at Sedgemoor, near Bridgewater, in which the earl of Faversham and lord Churchill commanded against him, decided the fate of the rebellion. The undisciplined levies which followed Monmouth's standard were defeated, and Monmouth himself, after fleeing twenty miles from the field, was taken at the bottom of a dry ditch, in the disguise of a peasant. He could not expect mercy, though he implored it in terms unbecoming his situation and his rank. Having refused to betray his accomplices, he was condemned to die, and underwent a sentence which the unskilfulness or timidity of the executioner rendered unusually severe. His head was hewed from his shoulders by repeated blows.

While Monmouth thus fulfilled his destiny in the south, the duke of Argyle made good a landing in Scotland; and, gathering two thousand five hundred of

his clansmen together, declared for the Covenant. There were no longer any remains of enthusiasm, either in religious or civil matters, north of the Tweed. The duke of Queensberry, and the earl of Perth, nay, the Scottish parliament itself, seemed anxious only to establish an unlimited authority in the crown; and the people had suffered too much during the latter years of Charles's reign, to be in any condition to vindicate their own rights. Argyle was defeated without having been able to meet an enemy, and suffered death by the hands of the executioner, amid the insults of a worthless court and a degraded populace.

Had James used his success aright; had he displayed the slightest moderation in his dealings with the vanquished; the rash attempts of Monmouth and Argyle would have proved eminently beneficial to him. As it was, though repressed at the instant, they became the remote causes of his ruin. In England, the military severities of lord Faversham and colonel Kirke, atrocious as in numerous instances they were, proved only a prelude to the still more savage proceedings of the king's chief-justice Jefferies. That minister of cruelty, having opened his commission in the western counties, so brow-beat and intimidated the juries, that they seldom failed of bringing in such verdicts as he chose to demand; which were in all cases followed by sentence of death, including, as the customs of the period required, dismemberment also. That James disapproved of these severities, and put a stop to them so soon as he received an official statement of the facts, there can be no doubt; yet Jefferies, their immediate author, received, on his return, the highest marks of royal favour: he was elevated to the peerage, and took his seat in the House of Lords as chancellor.

From that moment, James began to press forward the accomplishment of his great purpose with an eager-

ness which it is extremely difficult to accommodate to the dictates of common-sense. He was resolved to become an absolute monarch, only for the purpose of re-establishing the Romish religion; yet his anxiety to effect that end, led him into the adoption of practices, which, the slightest consideration of the temper of men's minds might have taught him, must, of necessity, place the means for ever beyond his reach. Early in the winter of 1685, he informed the parliament in his speech from the throne, that it was his intention to keep up the army which had served him so faithfully during the recent troubles; and to dispense with the exaction of the test from its Roman Catholic officers, of whom a considerable number had been lately introduced. The Commons, though with manifest reluctance, returned a favourable answer to the address; the Lords, with Compton, bishop of London, at their head, showed themselves more worthy of their place in the legislature. They voted that time should be taken to consider the topics to which the king had adverted, and persisted, in defiance of the new chancellor's menaces, in adhering to that vote. James was very indignant at this opposition to his wishes, more especially, as coming from a quarter where it had not been anticipated. He prorogued the parliament without loss of time, and, after many fruitless efforts to break the spirit of individuals, and repeated prorogations, which were carried on for a year and a half, he finally dissolved it.

The fears of the Church party were now thoroughly awakened; and the pulpits began to resound, as the press teemed, with polemical discussions and controversial treatises. The revocation of the edict of Nantz, also, by filling London with Protestant refugees from France, tended in no trifling degree to keep alive the excitement; while the king, regardless alike of his own previous assurances, and of the undisguised aversion of his people, continued by all the power of court-influence

and court-intrigue, to encourage the growth of Popery. Four Popish lords were brought into the privy-council; the strongest inducements were held out for the conversion of others; the Test and Corporation Acts were treated as a dead letter; and the army was as much as possible thrown into the hands of the Roman Catholics. In Scotland and Ireland, the same measures were pursued with a still more unblushing effrontery, till the moderate portion of the Roman Catholics themselves were forced to condemn the king's behaviour as injudicious. It was in this crisis, that the Church of England, which had in former times shown herself the champion of loyalty, stood forth in defence of the people's religion and liberty, which were alike assailed. The bishop of London having refused arbitrarily to suspend a clergyman who had preached some powerful sermons against apostasy, was marked out as an object of royal vengeance; and, by sentence of a Court of Commission, a tribunal newly erected on the model of that abolished in the reign of Charles the First, was suspended. Then followed a repeal, by royal proclamation, of all penal laws in ecclesiastical affairs; and the granting of a general liberty of conscience to all the king's subjects. To the disgrace of the Protestant Dissenters of England, they permitted their hatred of the established Church to bring them into an ill-assorted alliance with the Papists; notwithstanding that they could not fail of perceiving that no permanent advantage was ever meant to be conferred upon them; and they were only used as an instrument for the destruction of that body, which James justly regarded as the bulwark of Protestantism all over Europe.

Having broken through all the restraints of law in Ireland; by filling every office, both in the government and in the corporate bodies, with Papists; having asserted in Scotland, without disguise, the irresponsible authority of the crown; having gone so far as to send

an ambassador to Rome, and to receive back a legate in return; and thereby paved the way, as he imagined, to the reconciliation of his kingdom with the apostolic see, James determined to strike at the root of the church's influence, by throwing open the universities to dissenters. The vice-chancellor of Cambridge was suspended by the court of ecclesiastical commission, for refusing to confer a degree upon father Francis, a Benedictine monk. The fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, were expelled, because they presumed to disobey a royal mandate, which required them to elect as their president, first one Farmer, a convert to popery, and then Parker, bishop of Oxford, a trimmer of his day. But that which brought matters to a crisis, was the issuing of an order, that the clergy should publish from their desks, after divine service, a second declaration of indulgence, similar to that which had already appeared. Now there existed among the clergy, at this time, the best and noblest spirit. With the exception of about two hundred, the whole body unanimously refused to obey; and six of their prelates, Lloyd, bishop of St. Asaph, Ken, of Bath and Wells, Turner, of Ely, Lake, of Chichester, White, of Peterborough, and Trelawney, of Bristol, went so far, in conjunction with the primate Sancroft, as to draw up a remonstrance, or petition, to the throne. The king commanded them to be committed to the Tower, and sent them, under a strong escort, from Whitehall by water; but their progress resembled more that of men who enjoyed a triumph, than of prisoners on their way to a state dungeon. Both banks of the river were crowded with spectators, who rushed into the water to implore the blessing of the bishops, while the guards themselves bent their knees to receive the same benediction, and felt their hearts swell as the good men exhorted them to fear God and honour the king.

James was now thoroughly committed; and though

there were still some about him, who would have held him back from the precipice, on the brink of which he tottered, the advices of his queen, and his confessor, Peters the Jesuit, prevailed over all considerations of prudence and equity. The bishops were ordered to take their trial in Westminster-hall, whither twenty-nine lay peers, a vast number of gentlemen, and a countless multitude of the lower classes, followed them in an orderly but most imposing procession. For some time the jury deliberated. But when, at last, their verdict was given of "Not guilty", there arose a shout which indicated, in a manner not to be misunderstood, how deep was the interest taken by the people in their fate. It chanced that the king had that morning reviewed his troops, of which, during the summer months, he always kept a considerable body encamped, on Hounslow Heath. He was in lord Faversham's tent, when a tumult of happy voices reached him. He demanded the cause. "It is nothing," replied the general, "except the soldiers rejoicing at the acquittal of the bishops." "Call you that nothing?" said the king; "but it shall be the worse for them."

It was at this momentous crisis, when every new day brought fresh causes of disgust before the people, that the queen gave birth to a male child, whom, with indescribable joy, the king christened by the name of James. Of the immediate consequences of that event, as far as they bore upon the fortunes of England, I shall be better able to give an account, when the reader has been made aware of the previous position of one, who was destined to play a great part in the drama that impended.

Some notice has been taken of the prudence displayed by William, prince of Orange, when invited, by Charles the Second, to accept the hand of the princess Mary. His conduct after the marriage corresponded in every particular with the skill and management with which the

negotiation had been conducted. As if engrossed by plans for restraining French ambition, he kept aloof from all the party questions which agitated England, except, indeed, that he watched their progress with intense anxiety; and, by means of secret agents, bent many to his own purposes. I have alluded to the part which the prince of Orange played in the mad attempt of Monmouth to dethrone his uncle. The truth, indeed, is, that William was jealous of Monmouth; and being well disposed, at the same time, to keep alive the decaying spirit of disaffection in England, he secretly urged him to undertake an enterprise, from which he himself expected to reap all the advantages. On the other hand, his outward behaviour to his father-in-law was, at this particular juncture, such as became the relationship existing between them. He sent over six British regiments, which were in the Dutch service, to aid in suppressing the rebellion, and offered himself to command the king's forces; but it was owing to the personal application of James that he first openly took a part in the management of English affairs. William had organized a general league of the continental powers against France, which needed but the support of England to render it irresistible; and James, imagining that his son-in-law would purchase that support at any price, made an attempt to draw him into an approval of his own measures for the repeal of the laws against the Roman Catholics. James had permitted his sanguine and bigoted temper to mislead him. William was too prudent to disgust the English nation, which looked to him as a last resource in the hour of danger; and hence, while he expressed himself ready to except nonconformists of all denominations from persecution, he would not consent to the removal of the test, which he considered as the main bulwark of the established religion. Mutual alienation, with the prospect of an open rupture, was the consequence; which William

endeavoured to rob of its sting, by becoming, more and more, the head of the malecontents in England.

The intrigues of the prince had already proceeded to great lengths, and his adherents were importunate that they should be carried still further, when the birth of a son to James removed the last restraints which prudence, not principle, had hitherto imposed upon his ambition. He found that almost all the leading men in England were become his friends; for even the church party, the most uncompromising advocates of order, ceased now to entertain any hope of a peaceable redress of grievances. The nonconformists, likewise, deeming the offers of toleration from a Protestant prince, more secure than the caresses of a Papist, consented for the present to lay party differences aside, while the whigs, or country faction, in the spirit which urged them to advocate the Exclusion Bill, agreed willingly to oppose a king, whose conduct had fulfilled the prognostications of his worst enemies. Even the king's personal attendants, the earls of Sunderland, Churchill, and others, were ready to sacrifice their own honour, as well as their master's interests, to a cause of which they anticipated the triumph. To neglect such an opportunity as this happy combination of circumstances held out, would be to relinquish for ever his views on the English throne; so William began to make preparations with all the diligence, and all the secrecy which belonged to him, for one of the boldest, yet most politic enterprises in which a European potentate has ever embarked.

The army designed for the invasion of England, and the fleet intended to transport and convoy it, were as yet incomplete, when James received from the king of France an announcement of his danger, with offers of assistance both in men and ships. He haughtily rejected the one, and avowed his disbelief of the other; indeed, so far was his infatuation carried, that

he threw into prison Skelton, who had been his ambassador at the Hague, because he appeared to have sanctioned a remonstrance with the States on the part of Louis. Meanwhile he pushed forward his own indiscreet measures at home, tampering even with the troops, and expressing much more of indignation than of surprise, when they refused to become his instruments for the establishment of popery. He had just received a proof of the obstinacy of one battalion, and had assured the soldiers sullenly, "that for the future, he would not do them the honour to apply for their approbation," when a letter from the marquess of Abbeville, his minister at the Hague, showed to him the precipice on the brink of which he was tottering. Both he and his advisers became at once as mean, as they had hitherto been arbitrary. The displaced lieutenants and magistrates of counties were restored; the prelates were taken into favour, the suspension under which the bishop of London laboured was removed; and the expelled president and fellows of Magdalen College were reinstated in their offices. London, with all other corporations, received back their charters, and the Court of Ecclesiastical Commission was dissolved. But neither these measures, nor the steps which were now at length taken to refute a groundless calumny touching the child, which was said to have been imposed on the country, availed. None of his subjects gave the king credit for sincerity, while all perused with eagerness the prince of Orange's manifesto, which was already circulated through every town and village in the kingdom.

On the 5th of November, 1688, the prince of Orange landed at Torbay, at the head of a well-appointed army of fourteen thousand men. He had encountered a storm on his passage, and was saved from an action with the English fleet, only by the prevalence of a strong west wind; and even now it

seemed for a while, as if men were afraid to join him. But his arrangements were too just, and the organization of the kingdom too complete, to leave any reasonable doubt of the success of the undertaking. By degrees, adherents came forward in every quarter. Some openly appeared in arms, and seized towns and fortresses in his name; while others petitioned for a free parliament, and if they did not raise their hands against the king, at all events embarrassed his counsels, and alarmed his fears. But that which affected James most deeply, was the desertion of his troops, including many officers of the highest rank, in whom he mainly confided. Even lord Churchill, whom he had raised from the station of a page to the peerage, went over to William, and prince George of Denmark himself, with the lady Anne, the king's daughter, followed the example. James instantly retired from Salisbury, whither he had advanced; and after vainly endeavouring to bring his son-in-law to a personal conference, issued writs for the assembling of a free parliament. His fears, however, continually worked upon, by the queen, by the popish priests, and even by the French ambassadors, prevailed at last over every consideration of honour, and even of interest. He suddenly sent away his consort and infant son to Paris, and after recalling the writs for the new parliament, and casting the great seal into the river, he fled in the dead of night, and left London to its fate. It is said, that these measures were adopted by the advice of the French ambassador, under the idea that his subjects would gladly recall him, as the only means of delivering themselves from the horrors of anarchy. Never was opinion more hastily taken up, or on more mistaken grounds. It is true, that for three or four days, the capital presented the sort of spectacle which a great city abandoned or betrayed by its magistrates must always present. There was no government; the

populace felt that there was none; and they therefore hastened, under the pretext of zeal in the Protestant cause, to commit everywhere the grossest outrages on person and property. But the bishops and nobles who were in town saw and acted on the emergency, by seizing the reins which the king had cast from him; and opening an immediate negotiation with the prince, invited him to come to their support. William was not slow in acting upon the message thus conveyed to him; he was already far advanced, when an event befell, which threatened for a while to derange all the plans which he and his friends had concocted, and of which they saw, in the king's supposed flight to the continent, the most ready means of accomplishment.

James had hastened to Faversham, where it was his design to embark. He found no vessel in readiness, and being mistaken, in his disguise, for a popish priest, he was seized by the authorities of the town. When the gentlemen in the neighbourhood ascertained the condition of the prisoner, they interfered to save him from insult, but would on no account be persuaded to connive at his escape. He was accordingly brought back to Whitehall, and his arrival there, while it excited the compassion of the giddy multitude, occasioned no trifling embarrassment in the councils of the prince of Orange and his faction. It was their object to place the king in the situation of one who had voluntarily abdicated the throne; and his flight, under the peculiar circumstances which attended it, had fully attained that object; nothing, therefore, could be to them more unfortunate or more embarrassing, than his return to the capital, where it appeared alike difficult to deal with him as a sovereign and as a captive. But the prince, a perfect master of the part which it behoved him to play, soon relieved his friends from their anxiety. The king was treated with studied respect; his personal fears were worked upon; he was

permitted to retire, at his own request, to Rochester, and a sluggish watch kept over him. The consequences were exactly such as the prince anticipated. James fled again; and being more fortunate on this than on the previous occasion, landed safely at Ambleteuse,—whence he betook himself to St. Germain's.

So far every thing proceeded according to the wishes of the best friends of liberty; for in Scotland, not less than in England, the authority of James had fallen, as it were, of its own weight. But there still remained an important point to be settled: How was the government of the empire thenceforth to be conducted? There were not wanting men who advised the prince of Orange to advance the claims of a conqueror, and assuming the regal title, to leave its confirmation to the parliament, which it would be necessary to assemble as soon as order returned. William, however, was both too prudent, and too well assured of success by other means, to adopt an expedient so perilous, because open to so many objections. He caused such members as had sat in any of Charles the Second's parliaments, assisted by the lord-mayor and fifty common-council-men, to meet; and left it to them to determine the course which, under circumstances so peculiar, it might behove the nation to adopt. The peers and bishops, to the number of nearly ninety, had already advised the prince to summon a Convention, and the Commons heartily concurred in the resolution. Circular letters were, in consequence, written to all the burghs and cities; and, in due time, a body of persons came together, who, as they had been chosen by the unbiassed suffrages of the freeholders, may not unfairly be regarded as the legitimate representatives of the national sentiments.

The questions proposed to the Convention parliament were these: Whether James, having quitted the kingdom, had forfeited or abdicated the government? Whether the throne were vacant, and whether a

regency should be appointed till the young prince of Wales should attain to full age, or his claims be set aside, and a new settlement of the crown effected? In the Commons, it was carried without difficulty that the throne was vacant, and that it had become the people's duty to elect a new sovereign. The Lords resisted both propositions for a time, on the ground that though James himself might have forfeited his rights, it was both inexpedient, and contrary to the spirit of the constitution, that the line of succession should be changed. But a frank announcement from William, that he would not undertake the regency; that he would not consent to wear a crown for which he should be indebted to another, turned the balance in the dispute between the two houses, in favour of the Commons. A bill was in consequence passed, which settled the crown on the prince and princess of Orange, conjointly; which intrusted the administration of affairs entirely to the prince; which arranged the succession in the princess of Denmark after the death of the prince and princess of Orange; and in her posterity, in preference to that of William by any other marriage. But the Convention effected more for the happiness of England than the transference of the sceptre from one hand to another. They annexed to this settlement of the crown, a Declaration of Rights, in which all the points recently in dispute between the king and the people were determined; and circumscribed the royal prerogative within limits more narrow, and more exactly defined, than at any other period in English history.

Thus ended the reign of James the Second; a prince whose private virtues are forgotten in the daring and pertinacious attacks which he made upon public liberty and the religion of his people. How far that act of the Convention can be accounted just or wise, which set aside the infant prince, and taught the people to

regard themselves as the legitimate source of all power, is a question which it would be now useless to answer. There was, indeed, but a choice of difficulties before the parliament, inasmuch as the absence of the infant left them without the power, by watching over his education, to hinder in him the growth of those opinions which had cost his father's downfall. But, on the other hand, the example which was then set cannot but be felt to have been a dangerous one; of which it is just possible that the effects are even now experienced in other countries than England. Be this, however, as it may, the removal of James himself from the throne was a measure dictated by the first principles of self-preservation; and the most inveterate foes to revolutions will readily admit, that it was accomplished with not more of address than of moderation.

The era of the two last princes of the house of Stuart is memorable for the growth of science in England, and the almost utter decay of good taste in the prosecution of English literature. Wilkins, Wren, Wallis, eminent mathematicians; Hooke, an accurate observer of the microscope; Sydenham, the restorer of true physic; and Boyle and Newton, both great philosophers, the last among the greatest that have ever lived, flourished at this period. Dryden, Otway, Butler, the duke of Buckingham, the earls of Rochester, Mulgrave, Dorset, and Roscommon; these, together with the marquess of Halifax and sir William Temple, were the most distinguished authors of the day. But, though to all be conceded some share of genius,—to several, genius of a very high order,—still there pervades their pages generally, with the exception of those of Temple, and some pieces of Dryden and of Butler, a taste so depraved and vicious, that the reader is apt to experience almost as much of disgust as of satisfaction, even when perusing their most admired productions. It appears,

indeed, as if the immoralities of the court had given a false tone to the feelings of society in all its gradations: for the wit of the era of Charles the Second is for the most part mere ribaldry; which appears to have been poured forth with an eagerness exactly proportioned to the importance or sacredness of the subject against which it was directed.

Charles the Second maintained a standing army of five thousand men; James increased it at first to eight, and eventually to thirty thousand. Both princes neglected the militia, but were attentive to maritime affairs; and under both, the royal, equally with the mercantile navy of the empire, flourished. Various new arts, moreover, were introduced into the country at this time; such as the dyeing of woollen cloth; the manufactures in hats, silks, glass, and crystal; while the erection of a Board of Trade, in 1670, gives proof that commerce had taken, even then, a prodigious start. The necessary consequence of all this was, a vast increase of wealth, and the rapid growth of luxury rather than of refinement, among all classes. Coaches began to come into general use; turnpikes were erected for the repair of roads; household furniture and apparel was of a more costly nature; and plate and rich hangings appeared even at citizens' tables.

It is to Charles the Second that the Royal Society is indebted for its charter; and to the same prince, or rather to his mistress Nell Gwynne, the worn-out soldiers of the British army owe the comforts of Chelsea Hospital.

CHAPTER X.

WILLIAM THE THIRD.—HIS EARLY UNPOPULARITY.—REVOLT OF VISCOUNT DUNDEE.—CIVIL WAR IN IRELAND.—WAR WITH FRANCE.—PEACE OF RYSWICK.—PARTITION TREATY.—DUPLICITY OF LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.—DEATH OF JAMES.—PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.—DEATH OF WILLIAM.

[A. D. 1688 to A. D. 1702.]

THE revolution was now completed, both in England and in Scotland; for the latter country had even anticipated the former, and, in a convention from which the adherents of the ancient dynasty unwisely withdrew themselves, the crown was settled upon William and Mary. It is true that viscount Dundee retired to the hills, where he gathered a bold and hardy band around him; and that the duke of Gordon, chiefly swayed by his counsels, kept, for a while, the castle of Edinburgh in the name of his old master. But the majority of the people were decidedly favourable to the change; and the opposition, both of Dundee and of Gordon, though gallant, and to themselves highly honourable, availed nothing. The convention became a parliament; it passed laws; demanded a redress of grievances, prominent among which were the abolition of Episcopacy, and a modification of the powers exercised by the lords of the articles; and if, in the latter instance, it prevailed only in part, in the former, it succeeded entirely. The truth, indeed, is, that William had tried the Scottish bishops, whom he found inflexible in their loyalty to the proscribed race; and hence, though little relishing the turbulent disposition of their rivals, he felt that no alternative was left to him. He accepted the proffered allegiance of the Presbyterians on their own terms, and the church-government of

Scotland was vested, as it has ever since continued, in presbyteries, synods, and a general assembly.

William had not long occupied the throne, when the spirit of faction, which a sense of common danger seemed, for a brief space, to have lulled asleep, awoke again into fresh vigour. His personal demeanour, indeed, both in public and private, was well calculated to produce that result, for William had nothing of the frankness about him which Englishmen love, and which, if judiciously employed, may mould them to almost any purpose. His eagerness to reign, likewise, his undisguised love of prerogative, and his partiality to foreign mercenaries, excited serious alarm among the whigs; while his schemes for the admission of nonconformists to equal rights and privileges with the members of the established church, disgusted all who adhered conscientiously to her communion. To such a height, indeed, were these jealousies carried, that, at one moment, there appeared to be at least as strong an inclination to recall, as there had been to expel, the banished monarch. But William was a wary, not less than a bold, politician; and as it was his peculiar ambition to be accounted the arbiter of the fate of Europe, he yielded many things to his English subjects, in order to obtain from them supplies of men and money. Finding that he could not overbear the rough humours of the commons, he endeavoured to win them by concessions, and, if he never thoroughly ingratiated himself into their good opinion, he at all events escaped the display of any determinately hostile feeling.

It was well for William, that he possessed sufficient self-control to give up, without a struggle, much on which he had set his heart; for the friends of James, though overawed for the moment, were by no means trodden into the dust. Dundee appeared in the Highlands of Scotland, at the head of a formidable force, which would have doubtless swelled as it went onward,

had not its chivalrous leader fallen by one of the last shots fired, after he had defeated the troops of the government in the pass of Killycrankie. Still the embers of disaffection continued to smoulder; while, in Ireland, the earl of Tyrconnel stirred up so fierce a spirit, that except a few places in the north, where Protestant colonies were established, the whole country declared for the house of Stuart. The consequence was, that when, on the 22nd of March, 1689, James landed at Kinsale, with stores and arms from France, he found nine-tenths of the population eager to bid him welcome: out of these, an army, both numerous and well-appointed, was formed, at the head of which, the king *de jure*, as his partisans fondly termed him, hastened to assert his rights against those who adhered to the standard of the king *de facto*.

It is said that James was strongly urged, by some of the ablest as well as trustiest of his adherents, to throw himself at once, with thirty thousand Irish troops, into Scotland or the west of England. Had he done so, it is not impossible that England might have lost whatever she is presumed to have gained by the change in her dynasty; but the counsels of others, who spoke of the dangers of an enemy in the rear, prevailed, and this bold, but obviously judicious scheme, was abandoned. He marched into the north, and opened a campaign of sieges, which led to disaster and disgrace in all quarters. Londonderry, an inconsiderable place, and held by a feeble garrison, baffled all his efforts for many weeks; and he was compelled, after committing under its walls acts of the most wanton cruelty, to raise the siege. The loss of the Jacobites, in this operation, fell not short of nine thousand men. A like result attended their attempt to reduce the castle of Crom; while, at Newtown Butler, a party of Protestants put to the rout more than thrice their numbers, pursuing them with great slaughter, and securing all their baggage and

colours. Nor was it in the field alone that James showed himself unequal to the task of subduing and governing Ireland. He became a tool in the hands of the Popish priests. All his acts, indeed, as well as the acts of the parliament which he summoned, tended more and more to render desperate the resistance of one portion of the community; while the more right-thinking, even of his own party, beheld with disgust that little attention was paid to the rights of the other. Property was confiscated without remorse; the coin was debased, the fundamental laws of the land were set aside, till even of his own officers there were some who began to doubt whether the cause which they had espoused were not accursed of heaven.

It is a curious fact, that while James was thus undermining his own influence by the facility with which he lent himself to the views of a faction, William had become, almost to an equal degree, unpopular, in consequence of the indifference with which he seemed to treat the sufferings of his faithful Protestant subjects in Ireland. So intently was he occupied in pushing his schemes of foreign policy, that the cries of the Irish Protestants for aid were unheeded, while regiment after regiment passed over to the Low Countries, as if there, and not in Ireland, the great battle were to be fought. At last, however, the force of public opinion, together with a sense of the real magnitude of the evil itself, induced him to act with greater vigour. James had held his court in Dublin about six months, when the duke of Schomberg crossed the channel with an English army; but Schomberg was cautious, perhaps dilatory. After reducing a few forts, of little value, he established a sort of standing camp, in a peculiarly insalubrious situation; and suffered more, in the course of one winter, from the ravages of disease, than he would have done by the most active campaign.

The bad success of Schomberg's expedition, the defeat

of an English squadron off the Irish coast, and a renewed attempt to shake the influence of the established church, by introducing sweeping changes into her Liturgy and Articles, excited against the king such a storm of unpopularity, in all quarters, that he had well-nigh sunk under it. Whatever measure the minister proposed was invariably resisted. William was anxious, from the most obvious motives of sound policy, to pass an act of indemnity, in which all who had opposed his government might, on certain conditions, be included. The commons not only refused to entertain the project, but made a movement to prosecute, with savage ferocity, such as had rendered themselves most conspicuous by their talent and their daring. They voted supplies for the continuance of the war scantily, and accompanied the boon with a demand for inquiry into the causes of the late failures in Ireland, and of the general inefficiency of the king's fleets and armies. So bitter, indeed, was the rancour of the Whigs, (for of them was the present house mainly composed,) that William would have willingly thrown himself into the arms of the Tories, had not these obstinately insisted on an exemption from all pledges, of which it seemed to be the inevitable effect to bring about a rupture with the exiled family. But, however keenly he might feel, William was sufficiently master of himself to control his feelings. A partial change in the ministry was effected; and then, by playing one party against another, and occasionally threatening both, that, if they pressed him too hard, he would abandon the throne altogether, he contrived, in spite of frequent insurrections and revolts, of which the Whigs were the prime movers, to guide the helm of state with tolerable accuracy.

Things were in this state, when, after appointing the queen sole regent during his absence, William set out on the 4th of June, 1690, to assume the command of

the troops in Ireland. He landed at Carrickfergus on the 14th; reviewed his army, which amounted in all to thirty-six thousand men, and set out immediately afterwards in search of James, with the intention of forcing him to a battle. The two armies met on the 20th of June, 1690, on a position ably chosen by James's general, in rear of the Boyne, a broad and deep river, of which the English were compelled to force the passage at two narrow bridges and three difficult fords. But though both sides fought bravely, for the Irish more than once beat back the assailants, and themselves rallied with admirable composure, after they had been driven from their first alignment, the fortune of William, which had more than once trembled in the balance, prevailed. The Jacobites were driven from their strong ground with the loss of fifteen hundred men; while that of the victors scarcely amounted to six hundred.

The English had to deplore the fall, in this encounter, of the brave old duke of Schomberg, who was shot by a musket-ball, while fording the river; the Irish mourned an event which affected them much more deeply than the death of any individual of inferior rank, I mean their unaccountable and unlooked-for desertion by James himself. That ill-fated monarch, who stood aloof during the battle, no sooner saw that the day went against him, than he fled on horseback to Dublin, where he paused only long enough to throw, as far as he was able, public affairs into total confusion. He then hastened to Waterford, where he embarked for France; while his rival, pushing upon the capital, made himself, without resistance, master of all the springs of government. These he soon set in motion; after which, he marched into the provinces, and entered upon a series of sieges, which he carried on for a while without adequate preparation, and with very indifferent success. But that which William himself failed to

effect, his able successor in arms, easily accomplished. The king, returning to England in September, sent the earl of Marlborough to supply his place; by whom Cork and Kinsale were reduced; the French auxiliaries compelled to withdraw on capitulation; and peace, or rather the appearance of peace was restored, for a time, to Ireland.

William had not long relieved his consort of the responsibility attached to her as regent, when an event befell, which furnished him with a fair pretext for the accomplishment of a measure, startling, no doubt, and in some sense, novel, but, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, perhaps necessary. It has been stated that several of the English bishops entertained conscientious scruples touching the lawfulness of transferring their allegiance from James to William; and it is a remarkable fact, that in their number were included the archbishop, with those of his brethren who had set the example of non-compliance with the dictates of the late king's tyranny. It was natural that they should be deprived of their temporalities, and even inhibited from discharging their spiritual functions within the realm; yet such were men's opinions in the case, that the king did not venture to fill up the sees, as if the common casualties of life had rendered them void. A wild, undigested plot for the restoration of James, was now detected; in which one of these prelates, Turner, bishop of Ely, proved to be concerned. William's scruples were immediately removed, and the guilt of one obstinate bishop was transferred to all. Their sees were declared vacant; the chapters were commanded to proceed to new elections; and, doctor Tillotson setting the example, by supplanting Sancroft in Canterbury, all the rest were in due time filled up. As might have been expected, so decisive a proceeding gave rise to much acrimonious controversy, in conducting which, a great deal of ability was displayed on

both sides; but William was not induced by it to recede one step, or to deviate, in his future course, from the line which he had previously marked out. Even the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, so soon as it began to exhibit symptoms of a refractory spirit, was taught, by the abrupt dissolution of its assembly, that the hand of a master was over it. All these, however, and indeed, every other act of the government, which bore, or appeared to bear, on domestic matters alone, were regarded by the king as very secondary, in point of importance, to the management of the league against France. To concoct that league had been the great end of his existence, while yet prince of Orange; to wield and support it with the power of England, was now his chief ambition. He hastened, therefore, as soon as possible, to escape from the routine of a court life, and, carrying Marlborough along with him, passed over into Holland, where, early in June, he took the field at the head of a numerous army.

I cannot pretend, within the limits of a work like this, to give any outline, however meagre, of the progress or chief occurrences of a war which lasted without intermission, during a space of eight years. In its details, at least by land, it was generally unfavourable to the honour of the English arms; in its results, it unquestionably proved the means of preserving the liberties, not only of England, but of Europe. There were not, indeed, wanting, in those days, persons who blamed William; there are not wanting, even now, persons who continue to reproach him, as if he had exhausted the blood and treasure of Britain, in an unnatural struggle. But the writers who take this view of the subject, forget that the sole fault, if such it be, of which William can in fairness be accused, is, that he made the fields of Flanders, and not those of England, the arena of the contest. It is past dispute, that Louis's ambition never could have been satisfied, till he

had made himself master of Holland, and placed the empire under his feet; after which, there would have been nothing to prevent him from restoring the exiled family to the English throne, subject to such conditions as his generosity or cupidity might dictate. Nor is it candid to urge that William would have done enough for the honour and interests of his adopted country, had he confined his military operations to the sea. A war of ships may cripple the commerce, and exhaust the pecuniary resources of one or more belligerent powers, but a mere war of ships leads to nothing. Besides, though the navy of England was then formidable, and the prowess of her seamen of the highest order, England was not what she afterwards became, in the course of a few generations, the absolute mistress of the sea. At the commencement of the struggle, indeed, her fleets, even when supported by those of Holland, were scarcely a match for the enemy; nor was it till admiral Russell had obtained his splendid victory of La Hogue, three full years after hostilities broke out, that the allies could boast of any decisive superiority.

Having premised these general observations, I content myself with stating, that the war with France, which began in 1689, continued, without intermission, till 1697. It was carried on, like almost all continental wars of the seventeenth century, rather by manœuvre than by fighting. The hostile armies appeared in the field in spring; they watched one another; moved from position to position; laid siege to towns, which they sometimes took, and sometimes failed in taking; but a general action was an event of very rare occurrence, into which nothing but the last extremity could drive the leaders of either party. It seemed, indeed, to be the opinion of the great men of the age, that soldiers were intended to parade rather than to fight; and that provinces ought to be lost or

won rather by rules of art, than by the valour of those who carried in their hands arms, which they were seldom permitted to use. In proof of this it may be mentioned, that though engaged in frequent skirmishes, and though repeatedly forced to give ground, and to abandon the attack of fortified places, William fought but two great battles throughout the whole war. On the 6th of July, 1693, he attacked, with an army weakened by numerous detachments, the duke of Luxembourg, at Steenkirk, and was defeated; while on the 28th of July, the same Luxembourg became the assailant, at Nier-Landen, and was again successful. It is true, that in the reduction of Huy, in the assault and capture of Namur, and in other affairs of less importance, the English troops found opportunities of displaying their valour; but, generally speaking, the larger operations were against them; a circumstance, of which it needed but the lapse of a few years to demonstrate, that the cause must be sought for either in the errors of the system, or in the want of adequate skill in their commander.

All this while the state of affairs at home proved to be the reverse of satisfactory. A heavy pressure of taxation, the total interruption of foreign trade, and an unreasonable belief that the interests of England were sacrificed to those of the Low Countries, excited in men's minds much discontent, which certain unwise proceedings, with one or two acts of atrocious cruelty on the part of the government, tended in no degree to allay. The consequence was, that while in Ireland, general Ginckel, afterwards created earl of Athlone, carried all before him, and by the decisive victory of Aghrim put an end to the hopes of the Jacobites in that country, in England and in Scotland the same party received daily accessions to its strength, and that, too, from among circles where converts were least to be expected. Scotland, indeed, was roused to fury by an

occurrence which has left an indelible blot upon the memory of all connected with it; I allude to the massacre of Glencoe, as brutal and cold-blooded a murder as ever was perpetrated in any age or country. The clans had been ordered, by proclamation, to make their submission previous to a certain day, and many chiefs, won over, as has been insinuated, by gold, administered through the earl of Breadalbane, obeyed. Between Breadalbane, however, and Macdonald of Glencoe, a deadly feud existed,—and the ruin of the latter was coolly devised, and almost as coolly accomplished. Macdonald had long held back from making his submission, but was at last persuaded to comply. He arrived at Inverary a single day after the assigned term; he was, however, accepted, in consequence of the proofs which he adduced, that he had gone by mistake to Fort William, where there was no one appointed to treat with the disaffected. Yet, in the face of all this, a party of soldiers marched into the glen,—who, coming with solemn protestations of friendship in their mouths, and being sheltered, and entertained for weeks, repaid the hospitality of the old chief by butchering him in the dead of a winter's night, with upwards of thirty of his followers,—some of them mere boys,—by burning their houses, and driving their women forth to perish amid the snow. When the indignant outcry of a whole nation drove the king to institute an inquiry into this atrocity, the greatest exertions were made to lay the blame on the secretary Stair. But the fact cannot, unfortunately, be denied, that the order for the massacre was not only given in the king's name, but subscribed, as well as superscribed (a form indicative of more than common deliberation) with his own hand.

While Scotland rang with this tale of blood, of which the spirit of faction failed not to aggravate the horrors, in England there grew up a determined opposition

to the king's wishes, which threatened, at one period, to end in a counter-revolution. Many of the peers and men of distinction, who had been most forward in removing James from the throne, held, with the court of St. Germain's, close and familiar correspondence. Godolphin, Carmarthen, and Marlborough, with others equally influential, proved to be of the number; nor was the princess Anne herself altogether free from suspicion. But William, though indignant at what he considered the ingratitude of the English nation, possessed too much moral courage to sink under it. The suspected nobles were committed to the Tower; the princess Anne was commanded to withdraw from the court; and more than one obnoxious bill, particularly that for limiting the duration of parliament, was lost by the exercise of the veto. In like manner, William met the financial difficulties with which he was oppressed, by sanctioning the erection of a national bank,—an institution which enabled the minister to negotiate loans with far greater facility, as well as at a rate of interest more moderate than that demanded by Jews and jobbers. It must, however, be admitted, that bold and resolute as he was, William did not, on all occasions, adopt the purest methods, to overcome his enemies, or encourage his friends. He strove, indeed, to steer a middle course, between the extremes of Jacobitism and Democracy; giving his countenance freely to men of all parties, when he found them pliant; and, as the age was more than ordinarily corrupt, he scrupled not to render them so, by pandering to their passions both of vanity and avarice. Influence, indeed, began gradually to take the place of prerogative in guiding the public councils; for there was scarcely a man, whatever might be his rank, in either house of parliament, or about the court, who seemed not to have his price.

The death of Mary, which occurred on the 28th of December, 1694, produced no visible change in the

condition either of the king or the country. Plots continued to be devised, which the vigilance of the former defeated, and the war went on, as it had previously done, much to the dissatisfaction of the latter. One of these plots had, indeed, the effect of giving, as it were, a revival to William's faded popularity; for, however sensitive they might be to what they considered the anti-national tenour of his policy, the English were then, as they are now, too generous to seek other than open redress of their grievances. It was discovered that a plan had been devised for the king's murder, as well as for the invasion of England immediately afterwards by a French army. The matter was taken up at once by the houses of parliament, and by the nation. Sir John Fenwick was arrested, brought to trial, and condemned; an association was entered into for the defence of the king's person; new laws were passed, with a view of rendering more and more difficult the means of communication between England and St. Germain's; and fresh supplies were voted cheerfully. It is but just to add, that William showed himself not insensible of these marks of loyalty; and that, conquering past prejudices, he admitted again into favour,—first the princess Anne, and eventually her friend and counsellor, lord Marlborough.

The war had languished for some time, and all the powers engaged were enfeebled and weary, when, on the 29th of October, 1697, a treaty was signed at Ryswick, in Holland, which restored, for a brief space, to Europe the blessings of peace. By the treaty in question, Louis engaged to render up all his conquests, with the exception of Strasburgh; to acknowledge William as rightful king of England and Ireland; to withdraw his countenance from the exiled family, and never again to sanction any device which might have or seem to have their restoration for its object. So far the allies had little reason to lament the issues of the contest;

nevertheless William's foresight was too accurate not to convince him individually, that he had gained nothing more than a truce of very uncertain continuance.

Should Louis, on the demise of Charles of Spain, an event which might occur at any moment, revive the claims of the Dauphin and assert them, then one of two consequences must inevitably follow:—either the balance of Europe would be lost by the virtual union of the French and Spanish monarchies, or else the sword must again be unsheathed. While, therefore, he gave himself to work out some arrangement which might diminish, if it could not wholly obviate, the evils consequent on the former occurrence, he endeavoured to keep himself and his country in such an attitude, as should render them not unprepared for the latter. But here, as in other instances, William's motives were misinterpreted, and his designs thwarted by the English parliament. The Commons insisted that his Dutch guards should be disbanded; that all foreign soldiers should be discharged; and the standing army, even of native English, reduced to ten thousand men. So jealous were the representatives of the people of that liberty, which does not always find its worst enemies in the ranks of a disciplined army.

Having yielded this important point, and settled, not very satisfactorily for himself, the affairs of the revenue, William, under the pretext of ill health, withdrew into Holland, where he devoted his energies to the adjustment of a new treaty with France, of which, either as a politic or as a practical arrangement, it is impossible to speak favourably. The treaty in question, which is believed to have been mooted so early as the first negotiations at Ryswick, made arrangements for the dismemberment of the Spanish monarchy, whenever the throne should become vacant by the decease of the reigning sovereign. It was pushed forward by William,

because he equally dreaded the aggrandizement of France, and of the house of Austria; it was accepted by Louis, because he foresaw, that so long as William lived, there would be opposed insuperable obstacles to the accomplishment of his real designs. But a scheme devised by two foreign potentates, without any reference to the wishes of the Spanish people, could not but carry the seeds of failure along with it, not less active than those which were likely to spring from the ambition and mutual jealousy of the contracting parties. The ink, indeed, was scarcely dry, with which Louis's plenipotentiaries signed away the integrity of Spain, when Louis himself began a series of intrigues at Madrid, for the purpose of defeating the whole scheme. It is not worth while to give of these any detailed account; but their results proved that in diplomacy, if not in war, the king of France was more than a match for his wary neighbour.

While there was peace abroad, both England and Scotland, as not unfrequently happens, were torn with the strife of factions. From day to day the king appeared to become more and more an object of jealousy to his people; for not even a new election brought him a complying House of Commons, and the Whigs, equally with the Tories, thwarted and crossed him. His behaviour with reference to the South-sea scheme, likewise stirred up many enemies to his government in the north. A plan had been suggested for the establishment of a colony on the Isthmus of Darien, where an advantageous trade might, it was presumed, be carried on in both oceans; and a body of Scots, amounting to not less than twelve hundred, repaired to the land of promise, and settled there. Spain took the alarm, Holland became jealous, and even England expressed apprehension lest her commerce should suffer; and William, who at first had given his countenance to the device, suddenly denounced it. Provision-ships, which

had been commissioned to carry supplies to the adventurers, were stopped by an order from him: many of the unfortunate settlers perished of hunger; and the rest filled Scotland, on their return, with the tale of their own sufferings, which they attributed to the king's culpable partiality for his Dutch subjects.

The death of Mary had excited no serious alarm, even among the most zealous of the Protestant party; for the succession appeared to be sufficiently cared for in the nomination of the princess Anne, then the mother of a son, concerning whom men's expectations ran high. In the summer of 1700, however, an event occurred, which spread not less of dismay than of sorrow through the country. The young duke of Gloucester, who had received a strictly Protestant education, under bishop Burnet and the earl of Marlborough, sickened and died, and the throne was left without any reversionary claimant, such as the Act of Settlement could recognise. For a while the hopes of the Jacobites revived. They employed every device to hinder a new Act of Settlement from passing; and as the princess herself was known to look with a favourable eye to St. Germain's, they laboured not without some chance of success. But their exertions availed not. In June, a bill was carried through both houses, and received the royal assent, which devolved the crown on the electress Sophia of Hanover, the grand-daughter of James the First, and upon her descendants, subject always to this restriction, that they should themselves be Protestants, and that they should not be married to Papists.

Meantime the secret intrigues of Louis were working out their object at Madrid, in spite of the steady opposition of the queen, who, as was natural, favoured the house of Austria. The death of the duke of Bavaria likewise gave William some uneasiness; for it appeared

to derange the order of the partition-treaty,—but Louis was then the most complying of princes, and no resistance was offered, when the king of England proposed that a new adjustment should take place, in keeping with the spirit of the original treaty. It was accordingly settled that the archduke Charles of Austria should succeed to the government of Spain and the Indies;—that in the event of his accession to the imperial throne, he should resign the Spanish sceptre to his younger brother;—that the duke of Anjou should inherit Naples, Sicily, and the other provinces beyond the Alps; and that in no case should the crowns of France and Spain be worn by the same individual. Great was the indignation expressed, both at home and abroad, when the articles of this treaty became generally known. The Spaniards denounced it as destructive of their influence and glory; the Austrians were dissatisfied with it as mutilating the power of the empire; and the English exclaimed against it as dangerous to the maritime interests of their country, and too weighty to be concluded without the advice and consent of parliament. The progress of a short time brought forth ample proof, that there was no solid ground for the complaints which assailed William from all quarters.

On the first of November, 1700, died Charles the Second of Spain, a prince who was never able to act a great part in European politics, and who had latterly become a mere tool in the hands of his artful neighbour. Among his papers was found a will, recently made, which bequeathed the whole of his extensive dominions to the duke of Anjou, and postponed the claims of the archduke Charles to those even of the duke of Berry, whom, in the event of Anjou's demise, or accession to the throne of France, he nominated his successor. If in England a feeling of apprehension had prevailed, while contemplating the probable addition of the Italian provinces to France, the prospect of so perfect a union

between two mighty monarchies, caused it to operate in a tenfold greater degree. William, who complained to his parliament of the duplicity of the French king, was answered with a loyal address, and a liberal vote of supply; while ready encouragement was given to the formation of a new league, of which it should be the object to turn the whole strength of Europe against the common enemy. Germany, Sweden, Prussia, Muscovy, and the States, were invited to co-operate with England, in the endeavour to preserve a balance of power; and so ably was the negotiation carried on under the earl of Marlborough, that all, with more or less of cordiality, came into the project. But the provocation given by France to England did not end here.

Just at this critical juncture, James the Second expired, after years of exile, which he spent in the exercise of many virtues, sullied, perhaps, by a display of bigotry, for which it is difficult to account; and Louis, as if it had been his design to render the breach between himself and William irreparable, publicly acknowledged the young prince king of England. The whole country was forthwith in a ferment. Party spirit seemed to be swallowed up in indignation; and bills were brought in and passed, with trifling opposition, which went more and more to confirm the arrangements effected at the Revolution. The pretended prince of Wales, as the act described him, was attainted; and an oath of abjuration was required of all persons in authority, by which they disclaimed his title, and renounced any allegiance or obedience to him. As far, however, as William himself was concerned, this violent display of attachment to the new order of things availed nothing. A constitution, feeble at the best, had long begun to give way under an excessive pressure of anxiety and public business. He had avowed his conviction, indeed, that he could not survive a year; and an accident brought

about the fulfilment of the prophecy, even more rapidly than was anticipated. Though so feeble that he could affix his signature to the Bill of Abjuration only by a stamp, he continued to take a certain portion of exercise every day and was riding from Hampton-Court to his palace at Kensington, when his horse fell, and his collar-bone was broken. The fracture was easily reduced, but the emaciated frame of the king could not bear the shock. After lingering a fortnight, he died on the eighth of March, 1702, in the fifty-second year of his age, and fourteenth of his reign.

To the character of William the Third some injustice has been done, both by the panegyrists of the movement which brought him to the throne, and by the apologists of the prince whom he supplanted. As a man, he possessed, perhaps, few qualities calculated to excite our esteem; as the head of a great empire, he deserves a large share of our admiration. His foreign policy was, on almost all occasions, worthy of the king of England; and if in his domestic proceedings he committed some errors, these may be attributed not less to the pressure of circumstances, than to any deliberate intention, on his part, to act unfairly. No doubt there prevailed in his reign, a great deal of corruption and bad faith in all quarters. Statesmen, soldiers, electors, and representatives, lay alike open to bribes, and alike exercised whatever influence they possessed, rather to serve the purposes of faction, than for the public good. Yet even out of these materials William contrived to compose a government, which was at least respected abroad, and capable of preserving order at home. William might be an ungrateful son-in-law, a cold husband, a heartless man; but he was an able monarch, and a brave, if not a skilful, general.

CHAPTER XI.

QUEEN ANNE.—THE STRUGGLE OF PARTIES.—THE WHIGS PREVAIL.—WAR WITH FRANCE.—MARLBOROUGH'S VICTORIES.—THE UNION WITH SCOTLAND.—DECLINE OF THE WHIG INFLUENCE.—HARLEY AND ST. JOHN—THEIR ADMINISTRATION.—DISGRACE OF MARLBOROUGH.—ST. JOHN'S INTRIGUES.—THE QUEEN'S DEATH AND CHARACTER.—MISCELLANEOUS.

[A. D. 1702, to A. D. 1714.]

THE accession of the princess Anne to the throne of her ancestors excited general satisfaction throughout the country. To whatever parties they might belong, all men appeared to anticipate good from the circumstance. The Tories, not unaware of the secret bent of her wishes, looked forward to a policy which would end in the restoration of the banished branch of the family;—the Whigs, strong in the support of the duchess of Marlborough, calculated on an adhesion to the principles which guided the preceding reign. It soon appeared that both factions had taken an erroneous view of the queen's inclinations. While in the arrangement of her cabinet she leaned rather to the Tories than to the Whigs,—except, indeed, that lord Godolphin, a strenuous partisan of the house of Orange, filled the place of treasurer,—in her hostility to France, and an anxiety to preserve a balance of power in Europe, she showed herself, for a time, a worthy successor of king William. Her first measure was to refer it to the privy council, whether or not war should be declared; her next to despatch Marlborough, with full powers to assure the allies of her steady co-operation, while, by and by, an army was equipped and landed in Holland, which left no doubt in the minds, either of friends or foes, that England had taken her line. At the head of



Great Seal of William and Mary

that corps was the earl of Marlborough; and the confederates assigning to him the chief command of their divisions also, hostilities began under circumstances of the greatest promise.

While Marlborough gave, in his first campaign, an earnest of the glories which were to follow,—baffling the French generals in all their movements, compelling them to fall back behind the Maese, and making himself master of various strong places, the queen dissolved her parliament, and left the electors free to indulge their own pleasure in the choice of those who should represent them in the new House of Commons. The consequence was, that, for the most part, Tories were returned, who voted liberal supplies for carrying on the war; but who, being jealous of Marlborough, refused to settle upon him, or upon his descendants, an annual pension of five thousand pounds out of the revenues of the post-office. Their parsimony, in this instance, at once disgusted the queen, and alienated Marlborough, now created a duke, from the party. Nor was there anything, in their future proceedings, which had the slightest tendency to appease the one or to win back the other. They passed bills and voted resolutions, of which it was the manifest tendency to keep alive the hopes both of the exiled prince and of his party. When these were resisted by the lords, they assumed a tone which threatened, more than once, to bring the two houses into collision; while their mode of dealing with an abortive conspiracy, of which lord Lovat was first of all the author, and then the betrayer, committed them more and more both with their sovereign and the nation. Throughout the whole of these disputes, Anne carried herself with the greatest dignity and decorum. Even in Scotland, at that period the most uneasy portion of the empire, she maintained her authority without being compelled to employ physical force in any instance; and if she did sanction an act,

which left it at the option of some future parliament to determine whether, after her demise, the union of the crowns should continue, this excuse at least remains for her, that the only choice was between compliance and a civil war. Godolphin was greatly blamed as the cause of her yielding on that point. Yet she nobly supported him; maintaining to the last that the act was her own, and that it was unavoidable.

Judicious as the queen's proceedings were, it may still admit of a doubt whether a cabinet, composed of materials so discordant,—a cabinet in which Godolphin, and Harley, and St. John, professedly acted together, could have supported itself many months, had not the successes of the allied armies, under Marlborough, been so brilliant and so numerous, as to engage the strong passion of national vanity on the side of those under whose auspices so many triumphs were acquired. It is true, that the campaign of 1703 had not been productive of any great results; for which the extravagant jealousies of the Dutch commanders could alone be blamed; yet even it was not without its effects upon the general state of Europe. Besides that Portugal gave in her adhesion to the league, the allies made themselves masters of several places of strength in the Low Countries; which, lying chiefly along the Maese, secured to the States that for which they had long been clamorous, a strong frontier line. In 1704, however, triumphs much more brilliant, as well as more important, in reference to their general effects, attended the operations of the English general. He found, on his return to the Continent, in the spring of that year, that while the States were comparatively safe from attack, the emperor, partly through the successes of the elector of Bavaria, partly through the pressure of the war in Italy, was reduced to the brink of ruin. Aware of the fatal results which must follow any serious reverse in that quarter, Marlborough de-

terminated, at all hazards, to avert the calamity. With this view he suddenly changed the scene of his operations, and, equally deceiving both friends and foes, marched through Maestricht, Bedburgh, Kerpenord, and Kalsecken, into Germany. At Great Hippach, prince Louis of Baden joined him, just as a communication was opened with prince Eugene of Savoy; after which he passed the Wernitz, and attacked, with great fury, a division of the Bavarian army, in the fortified position of Schellenberg, near Donawert. The Bavarians were defeated,—the lines forced, and a passage opened to the Danube; which Marlborough immediately crossed, driving the elector before him, and compelling him to take shelter under the guns of Augsburg. So completely, indeed, was the tide of fortune turned, that the elector gladly hastened to open a negotiation, which, but for the reported advance of marshal Tallard through the Black Forest, would have ended in his unconditional submission.

For some time after this the campaign was one of marches; the elector manœuvring to form a junction with Tallard, and Marlborough striving to secure Eugene, who, with a force of eighteen thousand men, hung upon the rear of the French in their advance. Both sides gained their end; after which, each sought an opportunity of striking when the other might be unprepared. On the 12th of August, Marlborough, having gone out with a reconnoitering party, beheld the enemy in the act of marking out a camp, between Blenheim and Lutzingen, near Hochstadt, on the Danube. He resolved to give battle without delay, and on the 13th, after surmounting various obstacles which a swampy country and a rivulet with steep yet muddy banks are apt to present, he led his forces, in three columns, to the attack. A fierce contest ensued, in which much valour was displayed on both sides, though in point of skill and the excellent order of his

arrangements, the English showed himself infinitely superior to the French general. Masking the village of Blenheim, into which Tallard had thrown eighteen battalions, Marlborough bore upon the centre of the enemy's line, through which, after a sharp resistance, he penetrated as far as the tents, and placed himself at once upon the line of communication between one flank and the other. Irretrievable confusion followed. Tallard himself, with many other officers of rank, became prisoners; several thousand men were cut down in the pursuit, or drowned in the river; the whole of the garrison of Blenheim laid down its arms; and all the baggage, with tents, colours, and cannon, became the prey of the victors. Had the allies followed up their success as Marlborough suggested, the results might have been very great. But the prince of Baden envied his colleague: he insisted on devoting the remainder of the summer to a succession of sieges; and the enemy were, in consequence, enabled to recover from their panic, and to bring larger and better armies into the field.

Meanwhile, the war, both in Spain and Italy, was carried on with more doubtful success. The duke of Savoy, too weak to hazard a battle, saw town after town wrested from him. Charles of Austria, who had proceeded to Portugal for the purpose of asserting from thence his claim to the Spanish throne, found himself but feebly supported by the house of Braganza, and incapable of making any impression on the duke of Berwick. Yet was one exploit achieved this summer, of which, down to the present moment, England continues to reap the advantage. Sir George Rooke, the commander of the fleet on the Andalusian coast, suddenly attacked Gibraltar, and with very little loss, made himself master of the strongest fortress in the world. It is scarcely necessary to add, that though the conqueror was rewarded by a mere empty vote of

thanks, and a subsequent removal from his command, the conquest has ever since been regarded as one of the most valuable possessions of the British crown.

With respect, again, to domestic affairs, these presented for a while an aspect which was far from satisfactory. Between the English and Scottish nations no community of feeling prevailed. The parliament of the latter having, as has been stated above, passed an act, which rendered the succession to the one crown virtually independent of the succession to the other, the parliament of the former sought to avenge itself, by prohibiting the importation of Scotch cattle into England, and otherwise hampering and throwing obstacles in the way of Scottish commerce, both foreign and domestic. It was to no purpose that the queen strove to allay these heats, by suggesting the propriety of a union between the two legislatures. Though the Scottish parliament refused not to entertain the idea, the Scottish people were decidedly averse to it,—while the English House of Commons rather assented to the wisdom of the measure, when treated in the abstract, than gave themselves to the task of carrying it into effect. So impracticable, indeed, were they found to be, both in this case and in their dealings with the lords, that it was found impossible any longer to carry on the business of the country, and the queen, after some delay and hesitation, had recourse to the last expedient by dissolving the parliament.

The summer of 1705, was rendered memorable by numerous and important occurrences on almost every point in the wide theatre of war. From the Moselle, Marlborough moved into Brabant, where he drove the enemy from several strong positions, and reduced various places of importance. In Italy, on the other hand, the cause of the French monarch prevailed; while on the Upper Rhine, the prince of Baden, by whatever motive actuated, permitted more than one

favourable opportunity to pass unimproved, and accomplished nothing. It was in Spain, however, that fortune appeared most decidedly to favour the hopes of the allies. The earl of Peterborough, a dashing but unstable warrior, ran there a career of singular brilliancy, which, had there been in him more, either of system, or of temper, or of both, must have ended in the establishment of Charles of Austria upon the throne. With an army of nine thousand men, he besieged and took Barcelona, a city strongly fortified, and held by a garrison of five thousand excellent soldiers. He then pressed like a torrent into the provinces beyond; and though followed by a mere handful of troops, achieved successes which resembled more the fabulous conquests of knights-errant of old, than the systematic victories of a modern general. Unfortunately, however, Peterborough was both arrogant and incautious. He soon became an object of abhorrence to the courtiers of Charles, and, eventually, to Charles himself, who preferred risking the loss of his crown, to the mortification, real or imaginary, of being conducted to the capital by one whom he regarded as a personal enemy.

The experiment which the queen had been persuaded to try, by the dissolution of her impracticable parliament, proved eminently successful in its results. In all the counties the Whig interest prevailed; so that Godolphin was enabled, when the new houses met, to carry through, with a high hand, every measure which appeared to himself and to his colleagues conducive to the public welfare. Marlborough's views of foreign policy were zealously espoused—the movements of the Jacobites were repressed—and the question of the Union being once more mooted, received both in London and in Edinburgh the attention which it deserved. It is true, that in Scotland the great body of the people were opposed to it; and that the fears of the High

Church party in England, more especially in the lower house of Convocation, were strongly excited. But the lower house of Convocation had for some time weakened its influence by the intemperance of its proceedings with relation to the upper house, while the Scottish nation was overawed by an unusual display of physical force. This, aided largely by an application to men's self-interests, enabled the commissioners appointed on both sides, to settle the terms of the Union unmolested; and within a space of time wonderfully short, considering the importance of the point at issue, the two legislatures were blended into one. It may be said, that the discussions began only in the month of April, 1706; yet, in spite of a stout opposition both in London and Edinburgh, every clause of the bill was carried; and after a brief prorogation, the parliament met again in May, 1707,—not as the parliament of England alone,—but as the grand council of Great Britain. It is necessary to add, that to Scotland was secured the full enjoyment of her own laws, customs, and religion; that her peers were made to take rank with those of the sister kingdom, though sixteen only were permitted to sit in the House of Lords; that her commons were represented by forty-five members, chosen, some by the freeholders of counties, others by the members of corporations; that all royal boroughs retained their charters; that all hereditary jurisdictions were continued; and, finally, that the subjects of each kingdom were declared to possess, as well within the limits of the other, as in the colonies dependent on it, the same rights, privileges, and immunities, with persons born in the land.

Thus far the domestic policy of England was conducted with equal wisdom and address. There was a unity of purpose in the queen's councils, which enabled her to carry through all her measures, and particularly that which, more than any other that had been accom-

plished since the union of the two crowns, tended to give strength and consistency to the empire. Abroad, too, the glory of England and of her allies rose from day to day to a greater height. In the Low Countries Marlborough obtained so many successes, that the intelligence of a new victory ceased to be regarded in London as unexpected. At Ramillies he overthrew the armies of the elector of Bavaria and marshal Villeroy, making six thousand prisoners, and killing and wounding upwards of eight thousand men and officers. The reduction of all Brabant followed, including the cities of Louvaine, Mechlin, Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges. Ostend, though secured by a numerous garrison, submitted after a siege of ten days; and Menin, Dendermonde, and Aeth, surrendered at discretion. Spain and Italy were likewise the scenes of great and shining operations. While Peterborough and sir Cloudesly Shovel compelled the enemy to abandon the siege of Barcelona which they had formed, the marquess Das Minas, accompanied by lord Galway, penetrated across the Portuguese frontier, and, in spite of the skill of the duke of Berwick, and the valour of his troops, took possession of Madrid. Nor was prince Eugene, to whom the war in Italy had been committed, forgetful of his own or his country's renown. He marched through the heart of Savoy, attacked marshal Marsin and the young duke of Orleans, in their lines before Turin, defeated them with great slaughter, and saved the place just as its powers of further resistance had failed. The campaign of 1706 proved, indeed, on all sides, so disastrous to the French, that even Louis began to despair of the results. He accordingly endeavoured to open separate negotiations with the allies; he even offered to purchase peace by sacrificing his grandson's title, and dismembering the Spanish monarchy—but he gained nothing more by these insidious advances, than the knowledge, that his

enemies, though far from cordial among themselves, were equally disinclined to treat with him, except on their own terms.

It was at this juncture, when to all appearance the affairs of Great Britain were most prosperously conducted,—when there was tranquillity at home, and success abroad, with the prospect of attaining in the end a lasting and an honourable peace,—that a series of intrigues and cabals began at court, of which I have not space, had I the inclination, to give a minute detail, but of which it may be said in a few words, that they are almost without a parallel, for meanness and treachery, in the annals of political tergiversation. Harley and St. John, the former a Tory, the latter a Jacobite at heart, had been brought into public life by the duke of Marlborough and lord Godolphin, and proved for a while the most obsequious, as well as two of the ablest engines of the Whig government. Possessed of quick parts, and of insatiable ambition, they were not slow in discovering that the queen had been taught to bend her private wishes according to the measure of public duty; and that, above all, she was weary of the injudicious and haughty influence which the duchess of Marlborough had long exerted over her. They determined to work the downfall of their patrons, and themselves to rise upon their ruin. They began their operations by secretly exciting in the public mind dissatisfaction with the continuance of a war, which, however glorious, and fertile in promises for the future, entailed, in the meanwhile, heavy expenses on the country. They succeeded the more easily in this, that the summer of 1707, instead of beholding the last blow given to the military power of France, brought something like proof along with it that her resources were inexhaustible. Though his finances were known to be utterly deranged, and a grievous famine depopulated his provinces, Louis ex-

hibited a degree of vigour in his preparations for the new campaign, which set all calculation at defiance; and the blunders of the allies, co-operating with the diligence of his commanders, rendered these preparations effectual.

In Spain, Das Minas neglecting the recommendations of lord Peterborough, entered, without due arrangement, on offensive operations, and sustained a total and most disastrous defeat at Almanza. On the Rhine, marshal Villars forced the lines of Bhul, and laid the duchy of Wirtemberg under contribution; while an expedition for the reduction of Toulon, of which the naval portion was under the command of Shovel,—the military, superintended by prince Eugene, failed, under circumstances of extreme discredit to all concerned. These disasters, together with some heavy losses at sea, and the profitless issue of a campaign of manœuvres in Flanders, operated strongly to excite the disgust of a people, whom reverses always disgust rather than alarm; and the war, which a few months previously had been as popular as its promoters could have wished, became the subject, in every circle, of angry complaint.

It was now that Harley, assisted by Mrs. Masham, a lady whom the duchess of Marlborough had recommended to the queen, and who, in her turn, soon began to undermine her patroness, pushed forward his schemes with fresh eagerness. He had proceeded some way, and was not far removed from his object, when an event befell, which, while it appeared to retard the progress of a revolution in the cabinet, tended only to render it more sure, and more complete. It was discovered, that a traitorous correspondence had for some time been carried on between a clerk in Harley's office, and the French minister. Harley found no difficulty in convincing his mistress that the only charge, if such it could be called, to which he lay open, was that of having reposed too much confidence in a subordinate;

while Marlborough and Godolphin, from whom his designs were no longer hidden, insisted upon his dismissal. They carried their point with so high a hand, that the queen never forgave them; and though continued in office, they were made daily to feel that the confidence of their mistress was more and more withdrawn from them.

Of the state of public feeling throughout England, as well as of the distracted condition of the queen's councils, the court at St. Germain's was not ignorant, and the chevalier de St. George, for so the son of James the Second called himself, determined to take advantage of it. He was freely supplied, by Louis, with men, arms, and ships; and, embarking at Dunkirk, he directed his course, unobserved, towards the Frith of Forth. He had been induced to make Scotland the theatre of his operations, by the knowledge that the Act of Union continued still to rankle like a green wound, in the minds of the people; and as Edinburgh Castle chanced to be at the moment very inadequately supplied, he must have reduced it without difficulty, had he succeeded in effecting a disembarkation. But sir John Byng, the English admiral, suspecting the enemy's intentions, no sooner learned that they had quitted Dunkirk, than he, also, steered towards the Frith; and he arrived just in time to hinder a landing. The chevalier himself was eager to risk a battle, and failing in that, requested, at all hazards, to be put on shore; but the French commander would not listen to either proposal. He hoisted sail, and with difficulty regained the harbour of Dunkirk.

The abortive result of the previous campaign, and a conviction that the fate of the ministry depended on the issues of the next, acted as a stimulus upon the mind of Marlborough, and induced him to act with more than common caution as well as energy, throughout the whole of the summer of 1708. Though vexed

at the outset by the loss of Ghent and Bruges, he never permitted himself to be drawn into the commission of a single rash act, but watched his opportunity with equal vigilance and skill, and embraced it, when it did offer, with eagerness. After a series of brilliant manœuvres, he forced the enemy to give battle at Oudenarde, and overthrew them with great slaughter. This done, he invested Lisle, one of the strongest and most defensible places in the world, and, after a siege which called forth the most remarkable display of valour and science on both sides, compelled it to surrender. The reduction of Ghent, Bruges, Plassendael, Leffinghen, and other towns of importance, followed in rapid succession; nor were the troops put into quarters till late in December,—after a campaign which was not less brilliant than successful. So completely, indeed, was the confidence of the French monarch broken, that he again offered to purchase peace, by destroying the harbour and fortifications of Dunkirk; by securing a good frontier to the Dutch; by renouncing the Spanish throne for his grandson; by acknowledging the queen's title, and giving his concurrence to the Protestant succession. But in exact proportion as Louis's tone was lowered, that of the allies, and especially of Marlborough and prince Eugene, became more and more haughty. General Stanhope, besides checking the enemy in other parts of Spain, had taken possession of the valuable island of Minorca. This the confederates insisted on retaining. They required, likewise, that Upper and Lower Alsace should be restored to the empire; that Strasburgh, with all its dependencies, should be given up; and Lisle, with the territories annexed to it, conceded. They sought, in a word, nothing less than the total dismemberment of France; a scheme which, had it been accomplished, must have proved not less fatal to the repose of Europe, than the realization of the wildest dream of ambition in which Louis him-

self ever indulged. The French king, though weakened, was not reduced to the necessity of purchasing repose by such a sacrifice. He caused the demands of the confederates to be published and explained to his people; and then appealing to their loyalty for support, broke off the negotiations, and prepared for a renewal of hostilities.

It is difficult to account, on grounds wholly satisfactory, for the stubbornness with which Marlborough opposed himself, during this juncture, to peace. He knew, from a variety of sources, that his influence with the queen was on the wane; he could not but feel that the terms offered by Louis were, on the whole, more favourable than England had a right to expect, and he was too sagacious to be ignorant, that should France be reduced beyond a certain point, Austria must become as formidable to her neighbours as her rival had ever been. It was reposing too much confidence, moreover, in fortune, to press on to another campaign; which, through accident or error, might rob the allies of their glory,—an event, of which the immediate consequence would be his own disgrace, and the overthrow of the cabinet. Yet he did persist in advocating warlike councils; and took the field again early in the spring, with an army as numerous, and more full of confidence than ever. The result of the summer's operations not only disappointed him, but went far to verify the predictions of those who had reprobated its commencement. He himself, indeed, won the battle of Malplaquet, after a fierce and bloody contest, in which the loss of the conquerors surpassed that of the vanquished by a full third; while Tournay, a town of great importance, as forming one of the chain of forts which cover the French frontier, fell into his hands. But the prize was not considered, either at home or abroad, to counterbalance the expense of its capture; while in Spain, all things went on disastrously for the cause of England

and of Austria. General Stanhope, feebly supported by his allies, lost ground every day. Again, Louis availed himself of this seeming change of circumstances, to propose terms of accommodation; and again, through the management of Marlborough and Godolphin, were his overtures rejected.

A new parliament had met in 1709, and the interest of the Whigs still prevailed to return a considerable majority of members to the House of Commons; but, throughout the country at large, it was already manifest, and it became more and more manifest every day, that a remarkable change in men's views and feelings had taken place. High-Church opinions began to recover their ascendancy, together with a strong leaning to the monarchical, as contradistinguished from the democratic, principle. A striking instance of the popularity of these sentiments, as well as of the folly both of those who advocated, and of those who condemned them, was given in the behaviour and subsequent treatment of a clergyman, named Sacheverel. This man, a wrong-headed and violent Jacobite, preached before the lord-mayor of London a sermon, in which the doctrine of passive obedience was maintained; the events of the Revolution of 1688 not obscurely condemned; the queen's ministers spoken of in terms the reverse of respectful; and the Church declared to be in danger. At the desire of the lord-mayor, Sacheverel published his discourse, which was immediately denounced in the House of Commons as seditious; and the author made the subject of a formal impeachment before the lords. The whole nation was thrown into a ferment by the trial. Mobs beset the approaches to Westminster-hall, shouting, "God bless doctor Sacheverel and the Church." Even the queen herself went, day after day, to observe the proceedings, in her private chair. She was beset, on these occasions, by loud cries of, "We are for your

majesty and the Church;" while the houses of her ministers were saved from destruction only by the interference of a military guard. The result was, the condemnation of doctor Sacheverel to two years' suspension from the exercise of his office; the burning of his sermon by the hands of the hangman; a prodigious increase of popularity to the author, who was regarded as a martyr; and a wide diffusion of Tory feeling throughout the land. Thus, a foolish act on the part of a very foolish individual, and the unwise heat with which it was taken up by a jealous party, brought on a crisis which might have otherwise been deferred to an indefinite period, and possibly averted altogether.

The campaign of 1710 was attended by no very striking results in Flanders, and proved eminently disastrous to the allies elsewhere. Douay, Bethune, Aire, and St. Venant, fell, indeed, into the hands of Marlborough; but in Spain, Charles, after obtaining two victories at Almenara and Zaragoza, permitted himself to be totally defeated at Villa-Viciosa, and driven back into Catalonia. The truth, however, is, that the war everywhere languished, because the intrigues of the Tories had proved successful; and the wishes of Marlborough, and of those who supported him, were continually thwarted. This went on for a while; after which the queen suddenly dismissed from office Godolphin, Sunderland, and all the other Whig leaders,—Marlborough alone excepted; and supplied their places with Harley, created in due time earl of Oxford, St. John, raised to the peerage as viscount Bolingbroke, Harcourt, first keeper, and ultimately lord-chancellor, and others of the same class. Nor did the matter end there. The Whig parliament was dissolved, and the bias of the electors being in almost all places adverse to the discarded ministers, a House of Commons, eminently Tory, came together so soon as

the writs were returned. It was to no purpose that Marlborough, with a facility which was unworthy of him, permitted himself, at the entreaty of his friend Godolphin, to be retained in the new cabinet. His opinion was never sought, and, if offered, never acted upon; and when he returned as usual to take his seat in the House of Lords during the winter, both the queen and the Commons received him coldly. Still, he clung to his command, and went forth again in the spring of 1711, to excel even himself in the display of military talent; from which no consequences, except an increase to his own renown, were permitted to follow. While he was outmanœuvring Villars, and forcing the lines of Bouchain,—a chain of works which extended from the Scheldt to the Canché, on the Upper Scarpe,—while, after falsifying the boast of his opponent, that he had at length attained to his *ne plus ultra*, he reduced Bouchain itself, and laid open a free road to the gates of Paris,—Oxford was maturing his projects for bringing the war to a close,—and by means of the poet, Prior, and a French Jesuit, arranging the terms of a peace, concerning the fitness or unfitness of which, neither the general nor the allies were consulted. Seldom has party spirit shown itself, contemptible as under all circumstances it is, in more odious colours, than during a period when the honour and the best interests of the country were sacrificed, in order that a rival faction might be humbled, and, it was hoped, extinguished for ever.

By the preliminaries, which were actually signed at London before the slightest intimation had been given either to the emperor or the states, England abandoned at once the great principle for which she had originally armed,—namely, that a member of the house of Bourbon should not occupy the Spanish throne, more especially, a prince so nearly connected with the French succession as the young duke of Anjou. It is true, that Oxford

instructions from his own government, as an excuse for refusing to take part in them. It was to no purpose that Eugene argued, implored, and remonstrated. Ormond, fixed down by the peremptory orders which he had received, could not obey the better impulses of his own nature; but withdrew with the British contingent, to Ghent, and eventually to Dunkirk. His secession put an end at once to the honest obstinacy of Holland, Portugal, and Savoy. Too feeble to stand without the support of England, these powers reluctantly abandoned the coalition,—and the peace of Utrecht being signed on the 11th of April, Germany was left to struggle single-handed against her mighty neighbour. But one disastrous campaign taught the emperor that he was no match for the French king. He also came to terms, and, after thirteen years of bloodshed and misery, Europe returned almost to the same condition in which it had been ere the war began.

If the Tories anticipated that the restoration of a general peace would bring with it repose and enjoyment to themselves, the events of a brief space sufficed to show that they had grievously erred in their calculations. A heavy debt had been incurred; to meet the interest due upon which, as well as to defray the current expenses of the government, it was necessary to impose fresh taxes upon a people already, according to their own estimate, oppressed beyond the powers of endurance. In this emergency a malt-tax was voted, which bore not only upon the English but upon the Scottish people. The latter loudly complained. They asserted that the terms of the Union were violated, and insisted, either that the obnoxious duty should cease, or that they should again be restored to the condition of an independent nation. Once more were both Whigs and Tories hurried into the inconsistencies which are always consequent on the proceedings of those who act from factious motives. The Tories, who had struggled against

the Union when first proposed, hindered it from being dissolved, by resisting with all their strength the efforts of the Whigs, who had originally promoted the arrangement.

Foiled in this attempt, the Whigs adopted a more systematic and judicious line of tactics, by assailing their rivals on the side of the Protestant succession, and taking up, with somewhat of undue warmth, the cause of the elector of Hanover. That Oxford ever seriously thought of restoring the banished branch of the royal family, there is no evidence on record. Bolingbroke, indeed, lies much more open to the charge,—nor is Anne herself entirely free from suspicion of having wished well to, if she did not positively encourage, the project. But in the eyes of the Whigs, Oxford and Bolingbroke were equally guilty; because, though differing widely between themselves, they agreed in the one point of excluding the opposite parties from office. First, then, it was required that a price should be set upon the head of the Chevalier; and that all the potentates of Europe should be cautioned against affording him an asylum. When this failed, the ministers were assailed with demands, that the elector of Hanover, already created duke of Cambridge, should be invited to reside in England, and summoned, like other peers, to take his seat in the House of Lords. But the Whigs, by pressing both points with an acrimony of which it was impossible to mistake the object, succeeded only in injuring themselves in the eyes both of the queen and of the people. The Tories were not to be driven from place, nor is it easy to say what changes might have occurred, had they not permitted intestine jealousy to accomplish that which was unattainable by outward pressure.

There had never been much of cordiality between Harley and St. John. The latter, as ambitious as he was unprincipled, was content to play a secondary part

under the former, only so long as he entertained any doubts as to the firmness of his own position. He no sooner received proof, that on him rather than on his colleague, their common mistress depended, than he resolved to govern alone. Mrs. Masham was again called into play, and again proved her efficiency, by carrying forward a petty personal cabal, which ended in the dismissal of Oxford. Had he accomplished this end a few months earlier,—had he even possessed moral courage sufficient to step at once into the place from which his rival had fallen,—then might it have lain within the range of possibility that his ultimate projects should have attained their accomplishment. But Bolingbroke was at once too late in maturing, and too timid in carrying into execution those plans, which, if we may credit the common consent of all tradition, involved nothing short of a second restoration. While he yet wavered, and the treasurership lay in commission, the queen, whose naturally feeble constitution was unable to endure the constant strife of parties, became alarmingly ill. She fell, indeed, into a state which threatened only one result, and became altogether unfit to transact business. It was to the firmness of a committee of the privy-council, with the dukes of Somerset and Argyle at their head, that the nation was, in this juncture, indebted for a most important service. These noblemen hastened to the palace. They entreated their dying queen to appoint a treasurer, or at least to signify, by some sign, whether or not she was willing to receive as such the duke of Shrewsbury, and having prevailed upon her to make a motion with her head, they presented to him the staff of office. All that followed came as a matter of course. Without paying the slightest regard to Bolingbroke, the new treasurer summoned a meeting of the whole privy-council. Letters were then written to the elector of Hanover, to the duke of Marlborough, to the governor of Dunkirk, and

other influential persons, warning them of the probable demise of the crown, and preparing them for the parts which it behoved them severally to act; while a fleet was ordered to sea, and a body of troops quietly drawn round London, sufficient, as was believed, to repress every movement of the disaffected. Never were arrangements more judiciously made; and never have the good effects of judicious arrangements been more fully shown. A public and peaceable proclamation of the elector of Hanover, as George, by the grace of God, king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, made the inhabitants of the metropolis aware that the throne had become vacant; and that Anne had expired, on the first of August, 1714, in the fiftieth year of her age, and the thirteenth of her reign.

He who examines, with a commonly attentive eye, the proceedings of this stirring reign, will be at no loss in arriving at a tolerably correct estimate of the character of queen Anne, whether she be considered as a sovereign or a woman. Naturally warm-hearted and confiding, she was, at every stage in her career, the absolute tool of whatever individual might have established a supremacy over her affections. From the first of her public acts, indeed, the sad abandonment of her father, down to the last scene in her drama, the presentation of the treasurer's staff to Shrewsbury, it can scarcely be said that she was ever swayed by principle, or guided by the dictates of her own reason. Whatever the views of the favourite might be, these never failed to become hers; and they continued to be acted upon till some new partiality had supplanted the old, and then they were abandoned. Thus we find her at first a half-and-half advocate of anti-revolution principles; by and by, after Marlborough had adopted the sentiments of his wife, a zealous supporter of the Protestant succession; while, at a still more advanced period, she is moulded, through Mrs. Masham and St. John,

into an almost avowed promoter of the project of a Restoration. Even the nomination of Shrewsbury cannot be attributed to any sense of her country's best interests. It was a mere impulse of the moment,—the effect of that influence which Somerset, while present, was able to exercise, and from which she had no opportunity to recover. And so it was with respect to her views of foreign policy. These, like her opinions on matters of religion and order, were the mere reflection of the favourite's sentiments, without any foundation in principle, and totally independent of reason. Of such a personage a single short sentence will express all that can be said. She was a weak, and therefore a dangerous sovereign; the glories of whose reign, as well as their opposites, are in no degree attributable to herself.



Great Seal of Anne.

CHAPTER XII.

GEORGE THE FIRST—HIS PEACEFUL ACCESSION—CONFERS ALL HIS FAVOUR ON THE WHIGS.—DISCONTENTS.—REBELLION OF 1715—SUPPRESSED.—THE KING'S FOREIGN POLICY.—PUBLIC BURDENS INCREASED.—WILD SPECULATIONS.—THE MALT-TAX.—REVOLTS IN SCOTLAND.—THE KING'S DEATH AND CHARACTER.—MISCELLANEOUS.

[A. D. 1714 to A. D. 1727.]

THE first act of the privy-council which proclaimed George, the elector of Hanover, king, was to despatch a messenger to the court of the new sovereign, with full powers to inform him of the critical state of the country, and to urge his immediate occupation of the vacant throne. Whether it was that he felt confident in the justice of his claim, or whether he was merely swayed by the indifference which formed a prominent feature in his character, George showed himself in no haste to comply with the wishes of his advisers. The end of August came ere he quitted his hereditary capital, and it was not till the 16th of September that he landed at Greenwich. Yet, such was the vigour displayed by the chiefs of his party, and such the absence of all arrangement and decision among their enemies, that not so much as the voice of faction was heard in London. While Bolingbroke condescended to wait like a menial at the door of the council-room, and Oxford affected to join heartily in the plans of his rivals, the affairs of state went on as if no crisis had occurred; and George received the sceptre under circumstances of as perfect quiet as if it had come to him through a long line of hereditary possessors.

Had the new monarch displayed as much of liberality and true wisdom in constructing the machinery of his government, as he exhibited moral courage in his

mode of assuming the ensigns of power, there is good reason to believe that his memory would have been free from the stains which now attach to it. The Jacobite faction was by this time weak in numbers, and still more weak in influence. A large proportion of the landed gentlemen, and a decided majority among the lower orders were, indeed, warmly attached to the monarchical principle; and, in Church questions, perhaps, many carried their opinions beyond what would, in modern times, be accounted reasonable. But, of decided advocates for a second restoration,—in other words, of enemies to the Protestant succession, the numbers were very trifling, not only about the court, but in the provinces. Unfortunately, however, the king had been taught to regard all high Churchmen as Tories, and all Tories as Jacobites. His first measure, therefore, was to exhibit a marked distrust of all who were so much as suspected of entertaining High-Church principles, by dismissing them entirely from his councils, and filling up every place of trust and emolument throughout the kingdom with a Whig. Marlborough, though not restored to a seat in the cabinet, replaced the duke of Ormond in the command of the army. Lord Cowper became chancellor; the earl of Wharton, privy-seal; the earl of Sunderland, lord-lieutenant of Ireland. These, with other changes equally striking, soon taught the people to feel, that old things were, indeed, passed away, and a new dynasty established. Immediately a cry arose, that the Church was in danger, and multitudes permitted themselves to be hurried into the ranks of positive disaffection, who were originally marked with no deeper stain than might arise from an undue apprehension of popular influence.

Having dissolved the parliament which met him on his arrival, George summoned a new one by a proclamation, which had little tendency to diminish the angry and jealous feelings which his earliest pro-

ceedings had excited. In that document, he had the bad taste to appeal to the electors for support against some plot which was said to be in progress for his own overthrow, requiring them to return only such representatives as he could meet with satisfaction, and they themselves knew to be well-disposed to the Protestant succession. Men demanded one from the other, by whom the succession had been threatened, and numbers, who either did not or would not credit that any such design was in agitation, complained loudly that the whole constituency of the nation had been insulted. The consequence was, that in the counties many Tories were returned; whereas the boroughs, swayed partly by the power of court patronage,—partly by the monied interests, gave their support generally to the Whigs; so that when the house met, though both factions presented a formidable array of champions, the latter possessed a marked preponderance. No great while elapsed ere symptoms of the uses to which this superior influence would be turned began to display themselves. The members of the late administration, with all their most conspicuous followers, became objects of court persecution. Bolingbroke, sensible of his danger, fled to the Continent, and sacrificed his title and estates to preserve his life. Oxford was sent to the Tower, where he languished some time, though eventually released without a trial; Prior and Harley were committed to prison; the duke of Ormond and the earl of Strafford threatened with impeachment; and the former driven to consult his own safety by retiring beyond sea.

These proceedings, as harsh as in general they were impolitic, excited the indignation of the people. A picture of king William having been carried to Smithfield, was there publicly burned, amid the yells of a mob. When the birth-day of the reigning monarch came round, no notice was taken of it; whereas, the

anniversary of the Restoration was celebrated by bonfires and the most extravagant rejoicings. Nay, the guards themselves, whom, in a fit of wretched economy, the government had too much neglected, joined in the seditious cries of the populace, and were with difficulty restrained, by the personal exertions of Marlborough, from breaking out into mutiny. Such occurrences, followed as they were by tumults and riots in almost all the provincial towns, ought to have taught the sovereign that he who rules by means of a faction, and on factious principles, is but the king of a party. But George, whom nature had endowed with great courage and immovable resolution, saw in them nothing more than inducements to persevere as he had begun. He appealed to his parliament,—received from it ample support,—and, by a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and other measures equally energetic, strove to repress a spirit which he neither cared nor desired to conciliate.

The necessary consequence of all this was, to swell, from day to day, the amount of adherents to the cause of the exiled family, and to render the ancient chiefs of the Jacobites more bold and more busy. Communications were opened with the proscribed nobles, and through them, with the court of St. Germain's, which made a fresh appeal, and not without effect, to the sympathy of Louis the Fourteenth. The death of that monarch, which occurred immediately afterwards, and the accession of the duke of Orleans to the regency, served, indeed, to destroy whatever hopes had depended on the promise of foreign aid. Nevertheless, the conspiracy went on, more particularly in Scotland; where there prevailed numerous causes of discontent, till, at last, it was formally communicated by the king to the parliament, that a rebellion had begun. On the sixth of September, 1715, at a place called Braemar, the standard of the Stuarts was raised, and the earl of Mar, at the head of no more than three hundred of his own

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tenantry, proclaimed James the Third. In the course of a few weeks, Mar was joined by the marquesses of Huntley and Tullibardine, the earl marshal, the earl of Southesk, and other noblemen and gentlemen, whose united numbers came up to ten thousand men, of which a very large proportion were destitute of arms.

Meanwhile the Chevalier was not without his friends in other quarters of the kingdom. In Oxford so strong a feeling displayed itself, that the government thought it necessary to overawe the gowmsmen by quartering a regiment of dragoons in the city. The western counties likewise exhibited symptoms of uneasiness, which were not subdued without bloodshed; and even the House of Commons itself was found not to be free from the contagion. Many members were in consequence arrested, and many more bound over in recognizances to keep the peace. But one more spirited than the rest, Mr. Forster, a gentleman of considerable influence, eluded the officers who were sent in quest of him, and, hastening to his estates in the north, joined the earl of Derwentwater, and began immediately to arm his retainers. This done, the two chiefs marched upon Newcastle, where numbers were understood to be well affected to the cause. But the governor was on the alert; the gates were shut, and general Carpenter, with nine hundred dragoons, hastening to attack them, they were compelled to draw off. They retreated towards Scotland, and took up their quarters in the town of Coldstream, whither a strong reinforcement was already on its march to join them.

The rebellion of 1715 stands conspicuous, above all similar movements in Great Britain, for the absence of everything like talent among those by whom it was urged on. Mar, for example, instead of advancing with all his forces to the border, through a country as yet naked of troops, and well disposed to receive him, loitered away his time at Perth, while he directed

Mackintosh, at the head of fifteen hundred men, to cross from Fife into Lothian, through the heart of an English fleet, and to make his way as he best could to lord Derwentwater, at Coldstream. No man could execute orders so rash and inconsiderate with greater zeal or greater gallantry than Mackintosh. After annoying the English armies all day, by a variety of marches and counter-marches along the shore of Fife, he seized a number of fishing-boats at night-fall, and carried his brigade under the sterns of the ships of war, over an arm of the sea, which measures three and twenty miles in width. His progress, in like manner, to the point of junction, was both rapid and orderly. But when he arrived there, it was found that no man pretended to possess supreme authority, and that the campaign must be conducted according to the decisions of a council, into which all the principal gentlemen present were admitted. As a matter of course, the very first meeting of the council furnished ample proof of the spirit that pervaded the army. Some of the Highland chiefs insisted that they should join Gordon in the west; the English demanded to be led against general Carpenter into England; and when at length the latter opinion prevailed, more than half of the dissentients withdrew to their own homes. The remainder began their march across the Tweed, in a frame of mind but too truly prophetic of the destiny that awaited them. Having penetrated as far as Preston in Lancashire, they were attacked, and hemmed in by very superior numbers; and, after a brave resistance, found themselves reduced to the necessity of surrendering at discretion. A hard fate it was which overtook these gallant, but misled men. Of their officers, such as had borne commissions in the king's service were shot, as deserters, by sentence of a court-martial. The remainder, including Derwentwater and Forster, were carried in chains through the streets of London, to the Tower;

while the private men were shut up in close prisons at Chester, where many died of foul air, and the unwholesome and scanty provisions that were issued out to them.

All this while the government of Scotland, of which the duke of Argyle was at the head, was exerting itself with good effect, to put the country into a position of defence. Having drawn about four thousand men together, the duke crossed the Forth at Stirling, and took up a position on the upland district of Sheriff-Moor, not far from Dumblain. Hither the earl of Mar hastened to meet him; and a battle ensued, which ended without giving an immediate victory to either side, but of which all the moral advantages rested with the government. Mar's troops, undisciplined and disorderly at the best, melted away from hour to hour. Many clans, indeed, were drawn to the north, for the protection of their own homes, which the proceedings of lord Lovat had exposed; for that twice-sold traitor, after pledging himself to the court of St. Germain, had suddenly changed sides, and seized the town and castle of Inverness in the name of the king. Nevertheless, it is past dispute that Mar possessed none of the qualifications which render a man fit to conduct an enterprise of hazard and difficulty. He retreated to Perth, and loitered there while James, who had landed alone at Peterhead, was gratifying his own vanity, and adding to the danger of his followers, by issuing proclamations; and then, after wasting six precious weeks, announced to his sovereign and the army, that the cause was desperate. Upon this James fled to Montrose, where he embarked on board of a ship, which conveyed him, his general, and sixteen persons of rank to Graveline; while Gordon, on whom the command devolved, conducted a masterly retreat through Strathspey and Strathdown, to the hills of Badenoch. There the private men were quietly dismissed to their homes;

and the officers hastened to seek concealment, wherever there seemed to be a chance of finding it, till they should be enabled to escape, destitute and friendless, to the Continent.

All danger from this rash and mismanaged insurrection was at an end. There appeared, indeed, to be a disposition everywhere to rejoice over its defeat, when an ill-judged severity, on the part of the government, in dealing with the vanquished, inlisted once more the sympathies of the people on their side. When men beheld six noblemen impeached and condemned at once, and two, whose amiable qualities were well known and justly appreciated, led forth to execution; when they saw confiscations and attainders distributed with a merciless hand; thirty gentlemen of family and distinction suffering the extreme penalty of the law, and upwards of a thousand men spared, only on the condition that they might be transported as slaves to the colonies,—we cannot be surprised to learn that they forgot the errors of the culprits in compassion for their sufferings, and transferred a portion, at least, of their indignation from the laws themselves to those by whom they were administered. To such a height, indeed, were these feelings carried, that the government would not venture an appeal to the constituency of the country, when the regular period for making it arrived. Though the parliament had now sat three full years, the utmost limit to which it had been settled in 1694, that the duration of such assemblies should extend, no dissolution took place; but a bill was brought in and carried, which, repealing what has since been called the triennial act, fixed the duration of this and of all subsequent parliaments at seven years. Perhaps a bolder measure has rarely been attempted in any popular body. Nevertheless, the consequences have been found to be eminently advantageous in the practical working of the constitution, which now depends upon

a parliament, placed midway as it were, between the extremes of an unlimited duration, and the feverish and uneasy consequences of a too frequent recurrence to the will of the electors.

George was not so much occupied in securing himself on the throne of Great Britain, as to forget the interests, or what he believed to be the interests, of his hereditary dominions; to which, indeed, those of his new kingdom were rendered entirely subservient. He had purchased, during the confusion incident on the defeat of the Swedish monarch at Poltowa, the duchies of Bremen and Verden, from the Danes; and he treated with neglect the remonstrances of Charles, on the one hand, who complained loudly of this usurpation, and of the Czar, on the other, who remonstrated against any interference on his part in the politics of the north. Neither Charles the Twelfth, nor Peter the Great, were men likely to sit down contented, under any real or imaginary wrong. They both espoused the cause of the Chevalier; and the former, meditating nothing less than an invasion of England, instructed his ministers at London and the Hague, to enter into a secret correspondence with the adherents of the exiled family. But George, whatever faults might belong to his character, could not be accused either of timidity or want of decision. He caused the Swedish minister to be arrested, seized his papers, discovered full evidence of the plot in time to prevent its execution, and put himself forthwith in an attitude of defence. Nor did his lion-hearted, but eccentric antagonist, long survive to be a cause of alarm, either to him or any other potentate. As he was visiting the trenches one day before Frederickstadt, which, because he had invested it, he determined to reduce, a cannon-shot put an end at once to his projects and his life; while Russia, which had never entered into the views of James with much sincerity, abandoned them altogether, so soon as she

found more agreeable or more pressing occupation elsewhere.

The mistaken nature of the fears which had been excited by the accession of a prince of the House of Bourbon to the Spanish throne, was by this time fully demonstrated. There was no cordiality whatever between the courts of Paris and Madrid; indeed, the former exhibited of the latter a jealousy so bitter and so misplaced, that it lent itself to the schemes even of Austria, in order to depress the power which it affected to dread. These schemes embraced a plan for what was called, a settlement of the balance of power in Italy: they were cordially taken up by the states of Holland as well as by France, and they went so far as to stipulate, that Sicily should be exchanged for Sardinia with the duke of Savoy, and the claims of the Spanish queen on Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, postponed in favour of her eldest son. Now it would be hard to point out how the interests of England could in any way be advanced by the accomplishment of this project. She already carried on an advantageous commerce with the Italian states, which was not likely to be rendered more so after the change had taken place; yet, as the emperor had declared, that unless England joined the league, he would not recognise the claims of the elector of Hanover to Bremen and Verden, George became satisfied that only one course lay open to him. For the sake of securing an accession of territory to a state altogether unconnected with herself by the ties of kindred or alliance, England was hurried into a war, which as it opened with an act of glaring and atrocious wrong, so it led only to an increase of those pecuniary embarrassments under which she had begun already to labour.

While a struggle was going on for the possession of Sicily, between the Spanish and Imperial troops, the English minister at Madrid received instructions to

remonstrate with Philip against the opposition which he offered to the wishes of the allied powers, and to threaten him, in case of a continuance in the same policy, with the interference of an English fleet. Philip paid no other regard to this intimation, than by strengthening his own squadron, and protesting against the right which England had assumed, of dictating in a matter which no way concerned her. But George had already gone too far to recede. Admiral Byng was ordered to interpose by force, should milder arguments fail, to prevent the Spanish naval commander from succouring the garrisons on shore,—and though no declaration of war had passed between the two nations, he obeyed his orders to the letter. A collision took place, which ended in the destruction of the Spanish fleet. This was followed by an application to parliament for supplies, which were granted, not without opposition, and hostilities began in all parts of the world.

The Spanish war was neither of long duration, nor productive of any memorable events. At sea, indeed, admiral Byng carried everything before him; for Spain was by far too feeble, both in her councils and in her resources, to recover from the blow which he struck at the beginning: while on shore, no opportunity presented itself of bringing the strength of the two nations into collision. It is true, that the duke of Ormond attempted, at the head of six thousand Spanish troops, to make a descent upon Scotland; but a storm dispersing his convoy soon after he quitted port, only three hundred men made good their passage; a force which seemed in every respect too inconsiderable to tempt, to a second insurrection, men who still smarted under the consequences of a first. A few, indeed, of the boldest and most reckless clans joined the strangers; but these dispersed almost as soon as they were attacked by the royalists, and the foreigners

became prisoners to a man, in the pass of Strachell. A general pacification soon followed, on such terms as the confederates judged it expedient to dictate; and Spain, relinquishing Sicily, and otherwise yielding to a necessity which she found herself unable to resist, gave in a reluctant adhesion to the quadruple league.

1719.] From this date up to the Spring of 1727, England was not engaged in a formal war with any of the continental nations. Her foreign policy proved, indeed, too often the reverse of judicious; for she was drawn into endless treaties and arrangements, all of which had but one object in view, namely, the security or aggrandisement of Hanover. But though more than once called upon to arm, she was permitted to keep her sword in the scabbard, throughout the full period of eight years. At last, however, the irritability which had for some time prevailed throughout Europe, began to assume a more acrimonious character. At one moment Russia, at another France, at a third Germany, by alarming the king's fears for Hanover, had drawn an English fleet to the Baltic, or the Mediterranean; while Spain, though sometimes in alliance with England, never ceased to give such countenance to the Chevalier as excited the indignation, perhaps, the apprehensions of the court at St James's. It was with the latter power, countenanced, if not supported by the empire, that George found himself in the end, brought into collision; after several months of piratical and mischievous hostility on both sides. The war of 1727, however, like that of 1718, brought neither glory nor benefit to either of the parties engaged. The other states of Europe held aloof; and after a fruitless attempt on the part of Spain to recover Gibraltar and Minorca, peace was, under their mediation, restored.

While the interests of England were thus sacrificed abroad, and her treasure lavished on the purchase of

unstable allies for Hanover, the state of affairs at home proved far from satisfactory, either as regarded the condition of individuals, or the conduct of the government. The king, ignorant of the language, and disliking the manners of his new subjects, spent as much of his time as possible on the Continent; and gave his sanction to measures, of which, it is charitable to presume, that he had taken neither time nor pains to inquire into the consequences. A bill, for example, was brought into the House of Lords, by a minister of the crown, to limit the prerogative in the creation of peers, and to establish for Scotland twenty-five hereditary seats, in lieu of the sixteen representative peers, secured to it by the act of union. By the House of Lords, which saw that the establishment of such an order of things would throw unlimited power into their own hands, the bill was, after some scruple, passed. But the Commons, alike tenacious of their own rights, and jealous of the authority of the crown, rejected the measure, the opposition being led by Mr. Robert Walpole. Again, in the year 1722, the alarm of a fresh conspiracy was raised, which led to the arrest of many persons; among whom, was Dr. Atterbury, the celebrated bishop of Rochester. There is every reason to believe, that Atterbury was neither ignorant of the designs of the Chevalier, nor opposed to them; for Atterbury belonged to the High-Church party, of which, indeed, he was the most distinguished leader. But the proofs against him were such as no court could receive, however strongly biassed in its feelings. A more summary process was therefore adopted, for crushing an able, and, therefore, a troublesome political adversary. A bill of pains and penalties was carried through both houses, and received the royal assent, by which the bishop was deprived of all his preferments, and sentenced to perpetual banishment.

It was not however, by such acts, highly unconsti-

tutional as they were, though aggravated by the rashness with which the government took up the cause of non-conformists, so much as by the countenance which it gave to the wildest speculation among individuals, that England was brought, under George the First, to the brink of ruin. There was one Blunt, a scrivener by profession, a man of consummate cunning, and very plausible address, whom the example of Law, the projector of the famous Mississippi scheme in France, induced to attempt a similar device in England. Having engaged a certain number of persons to join him in the project, he proposed to the minister, that a company called the South-Sea Company, should purchase up all the outstanding debts due from the government to other trading corporations, on condition that, over and above a fixed interest, at the rate of five per cent., there should be secured to it the exclusive right of trading with all countries situated along the shores of the Pacific. Instigated, partly by a consideration of the additional facilities which such an arrangement would secure to him, in managing the financial affairs of the country,—partly moved by other and less honourable motives, which were applied indifferently to him, and to many members of both houses,—the minister gave his countenance to the scheme; and a bill being brought into the legislature, the South-Sea Company was established. Still the subscriptions to the company's stock came in slowly, though three hundred pounds scrip were offered for one hundred pounds sterling;—till Blunt had the hardihood to circulate a report that Gibraltar and Minorca were about to be exchanged for Peru. Then, indeed, the public mind became completely excited. Persons of all ages, ranks, and conditions, hastened to purchase stock; to secure which they not only laid out their last farthing, but, in many instances, contracted debts wherever they found an opportunity. Nor was it in this instance alone that the spirit of credulity

appears to have obscured altogether the good sense, which is said, whether truly or not, to form a principal ingredient in the English character. Nothing could be proposed too monstrous for the speculating temper of the times,—for it stands upon record that one adventurer made his fortune in the course of a single forenoon, by a process not less extraordinary than the following:—He sent forth in the morning a sort of prospectus, in which he pledged himself, by and by, to give the details of a plan, by which every individual, subscribing two guineas on the instant, would secure to himself an annuity of one hundred pounds a year. So completely were the English people engrossed with the love of speculation, that he obtained two thousand subscriptions ere sunset; and before the moon rose he was on his way to the Continent, whence, as may be imagined, he never returned.

The subscribers to the South-Sea Company had not held their shares many months, when a sudden panic arose, and the bursting of the bubble was as complete and as rapid, as had been its construction. Many eminent bankers and goldsmiths, who had advanced large sums on the security of that stock, became bankrupt, and countless numbers of families were overwhelmed with ruin. All confidence, in short, both in individuals, and in the government, was at an end. It was to no purpose that Walpole strove to stem the tide, by opening books at the bank for the support of public credit. A momentary calm was, indeed, produced, which served but to heighten the outcry that arose, after the transaction had undergone inquiry; for there was not a mansion, there was scarce a cottage, in the kingdom, of which the inmates were not more or less interested in the result. Finally, the projectors and promoters of the scheme were punished; Walpole became first lord of the treasury, and the amount of the national debt received a fearful accession.

Walpole's first efforts in his new situation were naturally and judiciously directed to devise such measures as might hold out some prospect of lessening the evil. He established a sinking fund,—obtained many resolutions from parliament, inculcative of public economy,—but was thwarted on every side, by the growing establishments of the country, and the heavy expenses to which it was put by its new continental alliances. Failing in this, he was reduced to the necessity of devising fresh taxes; conspicuous among which was a tax upon malt. The extension of that burden to Scotland roused into fury a people who had not yet forgiven the imaginary wrongs which they suffered by that very act of union, of which they pronounced the present proceeding to be a flagrant breach. Tumultuous assemblages of the people were held in various places, particularly in Glasgow, where some blood was shed; but the authorities displayed vigour: no persons of rank headed the rioters, and order, or the semblance of order, was promptly restored. Yet a sense of wrong continued to rankle in the minds of the Scots, which each successive year rendered more acute; and which, as will be shown in its proper place, the government of the country adopted no proper method to remove.

Such was the internal condition of Great Britain, when George, at the close of the Spanish war, declared his intention of paying a visit to Hanover, from which he had then been absent a space of not less than two years. Having prorogued the parliament, and nominated a regency, he embarked at Greenwich, on the 3rd of June; and landing at Voet, in Holland, on the 7th, slept there that night, and on the following morning resumed his journey. He had passed Delden, and was pursuing the road to Osnaburgh, when he was seized all at once with apoplexy, and retained no further command of his faculties than to direct that his attendants should push on as rapidly as the horses could

move. These orders were obeyed, but no good result followed; for the king expired on the 11th, about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and thirteenth of his reign.

George the First was a man of vigorous mind, of indomitable courage, and of more than moderate talent; yet was his government as unpopular as it proved to be, in many respects, unpropitious, at least, to the temporary welfare of his British subjects. The truth, indeed, is, that the elector of Hanover neither understood the nature of the British constitution, nor desired to render himself agreeable to the British people. All his affections, all his anxieties, centred in Germany; to which it seems highly probable, that he continued to look, even to the last, as a place of refuge against that counter-revolution, with which he was continually threatened. Whatever, therefore, was done during his reign, affecting the internal condition of the empire, must be considered, even more completely than the usage of the constitution authorises, as an act of his ministers. Nor would it be just to the men who presided in his councils, to deny that, with some measures, of which the sound policy appears even now to be doubtful, they effected many important improvements in the condition of society. In this reign, the principle of religious liberty was so far established, that while the supremacy of the established church was preserved, all grounds of real complaint were taken away from dissenters. The high-church spirit also, which, in men like Atterbury, entered into questions of civil, not less than of ecclesiastical, policy, was moderated; and every encouragement given to men of opposite opinions. How far the virtual suppression of the Convocation does or does not deserve to be accounted a wise measure, may admit of a question; but it is certain that the clergy added nothing to their respectability, by the violence which they displayed in the meetings of that body; and

that the body has ever since been hindered from transacting any business of importance. I say nothing, either in approbation or the reverse, of the severity with which the government prosecuted to conviction the unfortunate actors in the insurrection of 1715. Perhaps it might, in some degree, be necessary to throw compassion aside at that moment; but of the extreme profligacy which abounded everywhere, the venality of the electors, and even of the houses of parliament themselves, no man can think without disgust. One memorable trial, that of Thomas Parker, earl of Macclesfield, lord high-chancellor, at the bar of the House of Lords, which lasted twenty days, brought to light a system of bribery, even in the highest stations, to which we shall scarcely find a parallel in the history of any other civilized country.

The era of the three princes, of whose reign I have just given an account, is rendered illustrious by a galaxy of bright names, with which it is adorned in every



Great Seal of George the First.

department of literature and of the arts. Sir Isaac Newton, and John Flamstead, added largely to the scientific knowledge of their own and of succeeding ages. Its divines, Dr. Samuel Clarke, Dr. Edward Chandler, Dr. George Berkeley, the bishop of Cloyne, and Dr. Joseph Butler, bishop of Durham, have few superiors. The department of polite literature could boast of Pope, Addison, Steele, Prior, Swift, Young, Arbuthnot, and Friend. Sloane stood forth unrivalled as a naturalist and founder of the British Museum. Among sculptors, we find Wilton and Banks; among architects, Vanbrugh and Gibbs; and among painters, Kneller and Thornhill. All of these are great names, to which more might be added, but that we find for them a more exact station in the succeeding reign. But even these are sufficient to show that England was not more distinguished in arms, than in the more peaceful arts of life, at a period when her last and greatest struggle was made to secure that liberty which the Revolution had sealed.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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